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BLUFF, DECEIT & TREACHERY

**AN IMPERFECT SPY STORY
BY JAMES RUSBRIDGER**

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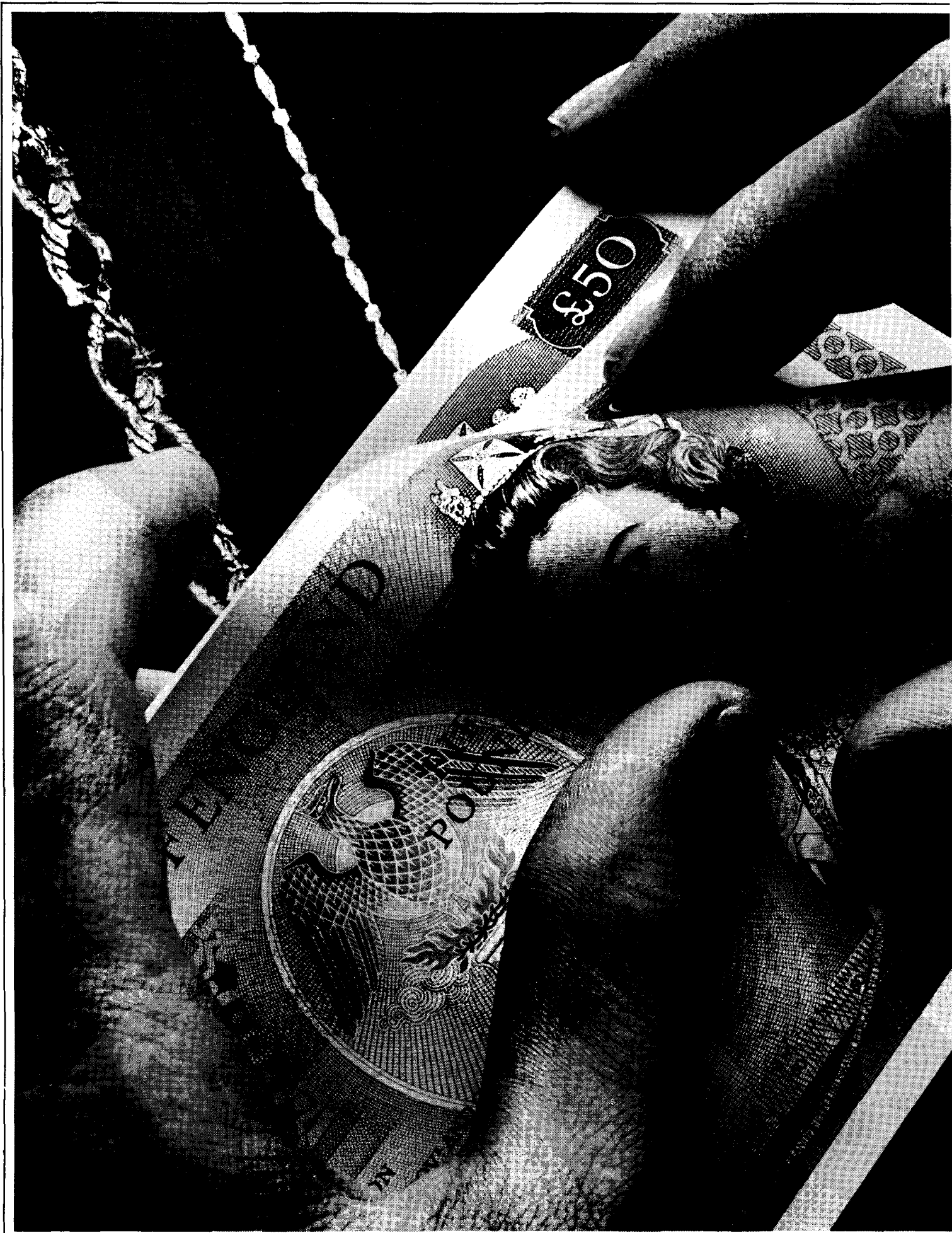
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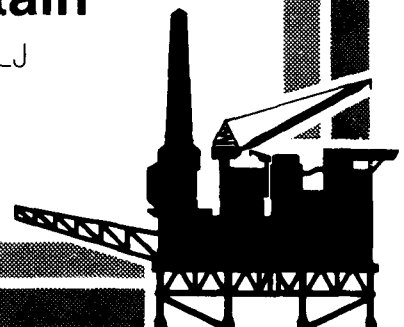
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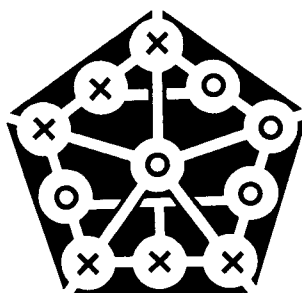
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James Rusbridger

Between Bluff, Deceit & Treachery

The Story of Henri Déricourt & an SOE Disaster in France



SPECIAL OPERATIONS Executive, the secret organisation created during the dark days of 1940, was to take the battle back to the enemy and, in the words of Churchill, "set Europe ablaze." Because Britain is not a warlike country, it had no experience of this type of covert operation

and had made no preparations. Thus SOE was inevitably put together in a rather amateurish manner, and often found itself at odds with the other established intelligence agencies—MI5 (responsible for internal security) and MI6, sometimes called the Secret Intelligence Service (responsible for espionage activities abroad).

The idea of sending agents into Occupied Europe to cause mayhem and murder appealed to Churchill's love of the dramatic, but it found less favour in other quarters—notably the Royal Air Force, which considered the whole idea ethically distasteful and a waste of scarce resources, and was most reluctant to provide the necessary aircraft. Additionally, as the War progressed, and the political tide changed, SOE found itself allied with the USSR and other strange bedfellows, which created unexpected problems of personal motivation and loyalty.

Despite these handicaps, SOE performed a magnificent task—largely due to the outstanding courage of ordinary men and women who simply saw it as their duty to serve their country against the tide of Nazi evil, without thought for their own safety. If history has served these brave people badly it is because for a long time after the War SOE was kept hidden from public view, along with its records. Many of the documents that might have helped to provide for posterity a complete and accurate record of its work were lost by accident or design; others were destroyed through lack of storage space; those remaining are held by the Foreign Office, where they can neither be inspected nor copied by the public.

The absence of accurate sources has inevitably created a

good many myths, some of which have found their way into books telling individual stories of great heroism. For some curious reason, however, there seems to be rancour and ill-feeling among those who have written about SOE, with many claims and counter-claims of inaccuracy and omission, and worse. Even the official history of the work of SOE in France, approved by the British Government in 1960 and finally published in 1966,¹ was not entirely successful. Many found the manner in which it was written unsympathetic.

SOE's most publicly known disaster—the so-called *Englandspiel*—took place in the Netherlands during 1942-43, when Colonel Hermann Giskes of the *Abwehr* and Major Josef Schreieder of the *SD* (the German counter-intelligence organisation *Sicherheitsdienst*) captured and "turned" a succession of agents. This resulted in the complete penetration of all SOE operations in the country, the capture of large quantities of arms and other supplies, and the death of at least 54 agents. The story has already been told in some detail.² All present evidence points confirmingly to its cause being the result of an incredible number of errors and stupidities at SOE headquarters, where the omission of the necessary security checks in radio messages received from the Netherlands was not recognised by the Dutch Section in London as proof that they were false.

SOE's French Section, under the control of Colonel Maurice Buckmaster, suffered disasters of an even greater magnitude, but less has been written about these and many questions remain. The single biggest loss of life occurred when the *Prosper* network, under the control of Major Francis Suttill, was by June 1943 completely penetrated by the Germans, resulting in the arrest and subsequent death of Suttill, his radio operator Major Gilbert Norman, and many hundreds of the network's agents.

The role of SOE in France was also bedevilled by the game of bluff and deception that the Allies embarked on in 1943. To understand how SOE became unwittingly involved in this, we must go back to 1942.

The Americans had proposed an invasion of northern France (Operation *Sledgehammer*) in the autumn of that year, because they feared the Soviet army might collapse following the series of massive defeats it had suffered on the Eastern front. Misunderstandings arose because the Americans assured the Russians that this invasion would definitely take place, but Churchill would not give it his support, considering it too risky and premature; he wanted

¹ M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France* (HMSO, 1966).

² See, in *ENCOUNTER*, "The 'Great Game' of Secret Agents", by the Dutch historian Louis de Jong (January 1980, pp. 12-21), and H. J. Giskes, *London Calling North Pole* (1953).

the landings in North Africa (Operation *Torch*) to go ahead first. When Stalin learnt that Churchill would not agree to *Sledgehammer*, he suspected a deliberate plot to delay risking the lives of British and American troops while hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers perished on the battlefield.³

In the end, Churchill got his way and the North African landings went ahead, while a single raid was made on the port of Dieppe (Operation *Rutter*, later Operation *Jubilee*), intended to tie up German troops in France instead of freeing them for the Eastern front.

In January 1943, the Allied leaders and their military commanders met at Casablanca, and it was finally agreed that the invasion of France, Operation *Overlord*, would take place in the spring or early summer of 1944. To placate Stalin—who remained unimpressed by the losses at Dieppe when set against the 250,000 casualties suffered by the Red Army in the Crimea during the battles of May and June—it was proposed that a major deception scheme, Operation *Cockade*, should be set in motion, to make the Germans believe that the Allies would be mounting an invasion of France and Norway in September 1943. But Stalin showed little interest in this plan; he continued to press for the real invasion of France to be brought forward.

The Casablanca conference ended on 23 January 1943, and the task began of preparing *Cockade* so that it would look sufficiently genuine to attract the enemy's attention without arousing their suspicions. This required a fine balance between illusion and reality. *Cockade* in fact consisted of three separate deception schemes: (1) *Starkey*—a large-scale landing from the sea in the Pas de Calais area; (2) *Tindall*—an Anglo-Russian invasion of northern Norway; and (3) *Wadham*—an American landing on the coast of Brittany.⁴

The first step was to create the impression that far larger forces than actually existed for such an invasion were available in Britain, and stories were planted in the press about “large-scale exercises”, involving non-existent units. Details were carefully leaked to Berlin through agents whom the Nazis fondly believed were working for the *Reich*, whereas in fact all were under the control of MI5's “Twenty Committee.”⁵

The second step was to give *Cockade* an additional degree

of verisimilitude by having SOE agents in France begin their “pre-invasion” preparations. In the Political Warfare Executive's report (submitted to the Chiefs of Staff on 18 July 1943⁶), it was proposed that SOE should *not* be told that the invasion plan was a ruse, so that they would “react with the full colour of authenticity.”

The documents relating to SOE's unwitting involvement in *Cockade* were released into the Public Record Office at Kew only in 1974, years after the publication of M. R. D. Foot's official history of SOE—this is why he categorically stated that SOE was never used in any deception scheme. Surprisingly, however, Mr Foot has repeated this claim in his more recent (1984) book about SOE published in conjunction with a BBC television series. Similar documents to those in the Public Record Office were made available in the mid-1970s at the US National Archives in Washington, D.C.⁷

With this background in mind, we can return to the principal characters in SOE's French Section, and the events in what was to be a tragic disaster.

CENTRAL TO THE whole appalling affair was the shadowy figure of Henri Déricourt, an Air Movements Officer for the French Section, who was responsible for arranging the RAF's night flights, mainly by *Lysander* aircraft, which brought agents in and out of the Paris sector of Occupied France. Although much has been written about Déricourt, his true role and loyalties have remained obscure because of the many false and misleading stories he told about himself after the War, and the almost total absence of any archival material about his career. The recent discovery of many of his private papers and pilot's log-books in his widow's apartment in Paris⁸ now makes it possible to establish the truth of his activities.

Born in 1909, Henri Déricourt was a Frenchman from a humble background who in pre-War days had been a highly qualified pilot with Air Bleu, the internal French postal airline for whom he worked from 28 December 1935 to 1 September 1939. Among Déricourt's Paris friends were Hans Boemelburg (a homosexual officer in the *Sicherheitsdienst*, attached to the German Embassy) and Nicholas Bodington (a correspondent for Reuters news agency since 10 July 1935), who was a fellow guest with Déricourt at Boemelburg's house. Déricourt had already done some intelligence work for the SD; Boemelburg had him listed as *V-Mann/48* (*Vertrauensmann*, a trusted informant).

During his time at Reuters, Nicholas Bodington had also worked for MI6, his contact there being Claude Dansey (who had a particular dislike for SOE when it was formed, because it encroached upon his own operations in France).⁹ In turn, Bodington recruited Déricourt to MI6 because of his friendship with and work for Boemelburg. Thus was established a secret connection that was ultimately to have terrible results.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, Déricourt joined the French Air Force, flying transport aircraft. By this time he had accumulated 3,408 flying hours to his credit (though his Air Bleu log-book shows that he never flew for them to

³ We now know, of course, from the post-War exposure of some (but probably not all) of his spies in the West, that Stalin was far better apprised of the Allies' innermost thoughts than we believed at the time. For example, he was quite aware that we were reading the German *Enigma* ciphers at the code-breaking centre at Bletchley Park. John Cairncross, who was recruited as a Soviet spy in 1935, later worked at Bletchley, and passed back details of *Ultra* to Moscow through Anatoli Gorski, his controller in London. See Chapman Pincher, *Too Secret Too Long* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), p. 395.

⁴ JP (43) 209, now CAB 80/71 at the Public Record Office, Kew.

⁵ See J. C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939-45* (1972); Juan Pujol and Nigel West, *Garbo* (1985).

⁶ COS (43) 386, now CAB 80/71, at the Public Record Office.

⁷ M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France*, p. 451, and *SOE* (BBC Publications, 1984), p. 156; COSSAC files 41/DX/Int, Modern Military Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Anthony Cave Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies* (1976), pp. 317-319.

⁸ Mme Déricourt died early in 1985.

⁹ An account of Claude Dansey's life can be found in Anthony Read and David Fisher, *Colonel Z* (1984).

Berlin, or to Spain, as has been suggested in some accounts); during his service with the French Air Force he flew only a further 52 hours. On 19 April 1940, three weeks before the Nazi armies smashed through Belgium and the Netherlands, Déricourt left the Air Force; he joined a firm of aircraft manufacturers, SNCASE, of 6 Avenue Marceau, Paris, as a test pilot, and continued to work for them after France fell to the Germans, until 15 November. For the next eight months, until 30 July 1941, there is a blank in his career record, but there is no evidence from his passport or other documents that he was in Syria at this period, serving with the Vichy French Air Force, as has often been claimed, and his log-book shows that he did no flying during these months. On 1 August 1941, Déricourt joined a Vichy airline called SCLAM, with Paris offices at 2 Rue Marbeuf; he flew government ministers around France, occasionally making trips to North Africa and Italy. By now, he was living at 50 rue Curial in Marseilles, where he met his future wife, Jeanne Patural, who worked as a hotel telephonist; on 13 December 1941 they were married.

Between October 1941 and June 1942, according to a report dated 21 October 1942, from Peter Ramsbotham of MI5 in London,¹⁰ Déricourt paid weekly visits to Mr H. M. Donaldson at the US Consulate in Marseilles, and kept in regular contact with the US Naval Attaché at the US Consulate in Vichy. (Following the Armistice in 1940, MI6 had been using the American consulates in Vichy France as a means of communication with their agents.) In July 1942, the War Office's MI9 department contacted Déricourt through Donaldson (responsible for organising escape routes out of enemy-occupied Europe, MI9 worked closely with MI6, but was quite separate from SOE) and told him to make plans to come to England as soon as possible.

At the same time, MI9 contacted Albert Guérisset, a Belgian who ran the *Pat* escape line,¹¹ and told him to arrange for Déricourt and another Frenchman, Léon Doulet, to be got out of France immediately. Guérisset clearly recalls¹² this most unusual occasion—the only time that MI9 gave him the real names of those using his escape route. It was evidently extremely urgent that Déricourt and Doulet reach London quickly. They left Marseilles by fishing-boat, and at a smaller port further down the coast transferred to a vessel flying the Spanish flag; it was, in reality, a British ship operated by MI9. This brought them to Gibraltar, and Déricourt and Doulet then travelled on to England, arriving on 8 September 1942. It is clear that Déricourt's escape was not something arranged on his own—which has always been the story until now—but was carefully planned by MI9 and MI6.

Before Déricourt left France, he had somehow acquired enough money to settle his parents outside Paris, and to give

his wife, who remained in Marseilles, a substantial sum of cash. How Déricourt obtained this sudden and convenient wealth has never been explained. In view of his subsequent activities, the money might have come from MI6 in London, or have been an advance payment from Hans Boemelburg.

Following his arrival, Déricourt was routinely screened for four days at MI5's London Reception Centre. He did not officially join Special Operations Executive until 1 December 1942, but his log-book shows that he began flying training with the RAF in early September, as soon as he left the London Reception Centre. Indeed, the record of his training flights from September 1942 to January 1943 reveals that he flew virtually every day, so that, apart from two parachute training sessions at Ringway, near Manchester, his SOE training must have been a very brief affair.

Déricourt's pre-War friend and MI6 colleague, Nicholas Bodington, had arrived in London in mid-1940, after the fall of France, and joined the Political Intelligence Department (PID), forerunner of the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), an organisation created by Churchill to wage a psychological war of propaganda and deception against the Nazis. In December 1940, before Maurice Buckmaster became head of SOE, Bodington moved to SOE's French Section as deputy head. Once again, the secret link between MI6, Bodington, and Déricourt had been established.

IT HAD BEEN INTENDED that Déricourt should return to France in December 1942, but bad weather prevented this. It was not until 22 January 1943 that he was dropped by parachute near his parents' house outside Paris, where he stayed for a few days. He then returned to Jeanne in Marseilles; after a few days the two of them travelled to Paris with his close friend Rémy Clément. There the Déricourts spent three nights with a SOE agent, Georges Besnard, who sent a message to London telling F Section of Déricourt's safe arrival. The Déricourts then moved into the Hotel Bristol, which at that time was completely controlled and occupied by the Germans; no Frenchman could stay there without their authority—clearly, Déricourt was reporting back to Boemelburg. Some weeks later, Déricourt and his wife moved from the Bristol to a flat he purchased at 58 Rue Pergolèse, conveniently situated a few minutes' walk from the Gestapo headquarters at 74 Avenue Foch. Déricourt's neighbour was Sergeant Hugo Bleicher of *Abwehr* counter-intelligence (cover name: Colonel Heinrich). As is often the case with intelligence agencies, there was acute rivalry between the *Sicherheitsdienst* and the *Abwehr*. In view of the open way in which Déricourt lived and moved about Paris, it is clear that the other German counter-intelligence agencies had been told to leave him alone.

From February 1943 onwards, Déricourt regularly passed information to the *Sicherheitsdienst* about SOE's activities in and around the Paris area, including details of messages passing between London and the *Prosper*, *Cinema*, and *Farrier* Resistance networks. As a result, captured agents were frequently shown copies of their own signals. Déricourt

¹⁰ Head of MI5's E Division, American Country Section, now Sir Peter Ramsbotham. American Embassy Files, Series 820.02, National Archives. Washington D.C. Some pages from these files have been withheld at the request of British Intelligence.

¹¹ The *Pat* escape line was named after Guérisset's codename, Patrick O'Leary.

¹² Albert Guérisset, in conversation with Robert Marshall of BBC Television.

revealed important details about SOE's London organisation—the German interrogators seemed to know so much about the inner working of SOE's headquarters that agents were tricked into revealing other vital information. The *SD* was also informed about all the landings and pick-ups he arranged as Air Movements Officer, involving a total of about 150 agents.¹³ The Germans kept these operations under close surveillance, watched the aircraft land, and followed agents to their safe houses, but made no attempt to interfere with them.

Finally, on 24 June 1943, they arrested Major Suttill (*Prosper*), Major Norman (*Archambaud*), and virtually all their agents. The entire *Prosper* network collapsed.

IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS there was much confusion in London as to what had happened. Eventually Nicholas Bodington decided that he should go to France to find out what had gone wrong, which agents had been arrested, and in particular if Major Norman, *Prosper's* radio operator, was still at liberty. To allow someone as senior as Bodington, with his extensive knowledge of *F* Section's work, to go into Occupied France was quite contrary to all the normal security rules of an organisation like SOE. (M. R. D. Foot suggests that Colonel Buckmaster may have been on leave when the decision was taken.¹⁴)

On the night of 20 July, Déricourt was flown to London. His visit was unknown to anyone at *F* Section, and does not appear in any SOE record. He arrived unexpectedly to join a pick-up arranged by the *Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action* (de Gaulle's secret service, the equivalent of MI6) and returned to France the next night, 21 July, again using a *BCRA* flight.¹⁵ These flights were under the control of MI6; they were kept quite separate from, and had nothing to do with, SOE. The most obvious reason for the visit would have been to warn MI6 of Nicholas Bodington's impending visit to Paris.

Bodington had arranged all the details of his visit by radio from London with "Major Norman", unaware that Norman had been under arrest for the past month, and that Dr Goetz had "turned" his radio and was impersonating him. Had Norman been forced to give Goetz details of the security checks he normally sent in his messages? If they were omitted, had London once again failed to notice? Or were the security checks revealed to Goetz by Déricourt? Whatever the truth of the matter, the Germans arranged an appointment for Bodington: he was to meet "Norman" at a safe house in the rue de Rome where they planned to arrest him.

Déricourt faced a dilemma. He knew that Bodington was coming; he knew that the Germans had set a trap. If he did nothing, Bodington would be arrested—with disastrous consequences for the whole of *F* Section. If Bodington failed

to keep the appointment, Boemelburg would guess that Déricourt had tipped them off, and Déricourt's credibility as a double-agent would be compromised. Obviously, if Déricourt had warned *F* Section during his 24 hours in London, SOE could have invented a plausible excuse for postponing the trip altogether, without arousing the Germans' suspicions. One must assume, therefore, that Déricourt was ordered by MI6 not to warn SOE, but to let the visit go ahead as planned.

BODINGTON, USING THE CODENAME *Alceste*, landed in France on 22 July 1943—the day after Déricourt's return—with his radio operator, Jack Agazarian (*Marcel*). Only then did Déricourt tell Bodington that the *SD* knew he was coming, that the radio messages to London had been false, and that Major Norman had been in custody for a month. Exactly what passed between these two will never be known for certain. The outcome was that Nicholas Bodington did not keep the appointment himself, but told Agazarian to go in his place. Agazarian was immediately arrested and taken to Gestapo headquarters in the Avenue Foch. He was subsequently executed at Flossenburg, six weeks before the War ended.

With his mission in tatters, Bodington was picked up on 15 August and flown back to London. He knew that his life had been saved only because Déricourt was working with the Germans, and that this liaison with the enemy was on behalf of MI6, but was unknown to SOE. Déricourt, in his turn, knew that Bodington had deliberately sent Agazarian to his death. The relationship between the two had, therefore, become a bizarre and secret one, placing Bodington under a strong obligation to help Déricourt no matter what accusations might be made against him.

DURING 1943, London had received several reports from different sources in France, suggesting that Déricourt's loyalties were suspect. Nothing was done about them. Either they were not believed because his work as Air Movements Officer was so good; or they were discounted as part of the endless internecine rivalry between different factions of the French Resistance; or those senior to Buckmaster, and responsible for SOE's security, knew that Déricourt was acting under other instructions, unknown to *F* Section.

Déricourt had realised that he would not be able to continue his liaison with the Germans indefinitely without coming under suspicion from other SOE agents. To pre-empt such allegations, he concocted a cover story: soon after his return to Paris in January 1943, he would say, he had been visited by some pre-War German friends, civil airline pilots with *Lufthansa*. They had supposedly introduced him to Dr Goetz, the *SD's* radio expert, who had tried to persuade him to work as a pilot for *Luftflotte*, the military air transport section of the German Air Force, but he had excused himself on grounds of ill health. (All this was completely untrue, as he later admitted. No such meeting ever took place.)

¹³ M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France*, p. 298; and Jean Overton Fuller, *Double Webs* (1958).

¹⁴ M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France*, p. 323, fn.

¹⁵ Hugh Verity, in conversation with Robert Marshall of BBC Television.

A report of this supposed meeting with the Germans reached *F* Section from their agent Henri Frager (*Paul*) on 23 June 1943, but as with so many of the reports about Déricourt's behaviour, no one seemed to take any notice.

Towards the end of 1943, however, the number of warnings about Déricourt's loyalties reached such proportions that they could no longer be ignored. On 20 October, Henri Frager again reported from France that Déricourt was working with the Germans; and in November Squadron Leader Forest ("Tommy") Yeo-Thomas, with the Gaullist section of SOE, told *F* Section that "*l'homme qui fait le pick-up*" was in touch with the enemy. At about the same time, SOE was on two occasions warned by MI6 of Déricourt's dubious loyalty. It was decided that he should be recalled.

In early February 1944, Major Gerry Morel of SOE flew to France with orders to bring back Déricourt, by force if necessary. Déricourt, however, insisted on postponing his return until he could arrange for his wife to accompany him. On 5 February he dined with Boemelburg and Goetz, and told them of his recall; according to Déricourt, Boemelburg thereupon gave him four million francs (worth at that time about £20,000), and asked him to try and discover the date of the Allied invasion of France. According to another version, the payment was blood-money for the agents Déricourt had betrayed. Whatever the truth, Déricourt kept the money (he planned to buy a chicken farm in the Midi).

An SOE pick-up was finally arranged for 8 February and Déricourt and his wife were brought to London. The following morning Squadron Leader Hugh Verity and Maurice Buckmaster confronted him with the allegation that he had been working for the Germans. According to Verity, Déricourt seemed quite unmoved, and promptly produced the bogus story about the visit from his pre-War German friends in early 1943.

ON 11 FEBRUARY 1944, Déricourt appeared at the old Hotel Victoria in Northumberland Avenue to face an SOE Tribunal headed by Air Commodore Archibald Boyle, SOE's Director of Intelligence and Security, and the vice-chief of SOE, Harry Sporborg. Although the full report of the Tribunal is not available for inspection, it appears that Colonel Buckmaster testified to Déricourt's loyalty, courage, and excellent work as *F* Section's Air Movements Officer.

Surprisingly, Nicholas Bodington did not appear before the Tribunal. He had returned from France on 15 August, had been sacked from SOE by Buckmaster at the end of the month, and had gone back to work at the Political Warfare Executive. Eventually, on 20 April 1944, he was interviewed by two security officers (one of them from MI5), who reported that Bodington "had been unable to produce one single new point that would help clear Déricourt."¹⁶

The Tribunal was severely hampered by the fact that MI6 refused to confirm their two reports about Déricourt from the previous November. Furthermore, Henri Frager's allegations

(the only other firm evidence against Déricourt) that Déricourt was working for the *SD*, who regarded him as one of their best agents, were heavily censored—they had originated from Hugo Bleicher of the *Abwehr*, and no mention of this source was permitted in case Bleicher was genuinely seeking to collaborate with the Allies.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Tribunal had insufficient evidence to find Déricourt guilty of treachery. It therefore effectively returned a verdict of "Not Proven", recommending only that he should not be allowed to return to France.

ONE CURIOUS THREAD in this tangled web is still unresolved. Aside from the extent of Déricourt's work for the Germans, the information he gave them, and the agents betrayed and executed as a result, there remains the question of just who in London knew about all this.

The first reports about Déricourt's behaviour had reached *F* Section in January 1943, only days after his return to Paris on completion of his SOE training. Nicholas Bodington obviously became aware of the truth when Déricourt saved his life in July that year. In Déricourt's personal dossier (now held with other SOE archives at MI6's headquarters at Century House in London) there is a note in Bodington's handwriting to the effect that SOE knew that Déricourt was in touch with the Germans, and also knew why. This gives the impression of having been written on 23 June 1943, roughly a month before Bodington went to France. However, M. R. D. Foot, who was allowed to see Déricourt's file, tells me¹⁷ that the note is undated; and it seems more likely that it was written in August, after Bodington's return. The note seems to be a retrospective attempt by Bodington to cover up his personally acquired knowledge of Déricourt's activities.

After the War, in a BBC *Panorama* interview with John Freeman on 1 December 1958, Maurice Buckmaster said he was quite certain that Nicholas Bodington, returning to London from his abortive French mission, had told him in August 1943 that Déricourt was in touch with the Germans. (Evidently, though, Bodington did not tell Buckmaster how this had saved his life.) Buckmaster told Freeman he had agreed that Déricourt's liaison should continue because "it was regarded as being possibly a useful thing."

It is unclear whether Buckmaster also told the Tribunal that this was when he had first heard of the liaison with the *SD*. But it is hard to believe that, once this liaison became known, Déricourt would have been allowed to continue his work without being swiftly recalled to London to explain what was going on, and having this explanation checked and approved by Buckmaster's superiors and those in charge of SOE's security. The most likely explanation is that Bodington never told Buckmaster the full truth of what had happened during his Paris visit, because to do so would have exposed the facts about Agazarian's death. Evidently, though, Buckmaster suspected that something had gone wrong and that Bodington had not told him the truth—and that was why he sacked him from SOE.

¹⁶ Christopher Woods, SOE Archivist, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, letter to the author, 28 November 1985.

¹⁷ M. R. D. Foot, letter to the author, 8 February 1985.

Colonel Buckmaster has told me in a recent letter (26 October 1984) that he was in fact running Déricourt as a double-agent with the help of Dick White, who was then assistant to Guy Liddell in MI5's B Division and responsible for German espionage affairs. But Buckmaster possessed no authority to sanction such an arrangement, since SOE was not involved in double-agent operations. Sir Dick White informs me that he had no part in such a scheme.¹⁸

A detailed account of the circumstances leading up to Déricourt's recall—about which Maurice Buckmaster says he was not consulted—and of the meeting at which Déricourt was faced with the charges of treason, is contained in Hugh Verity's book, *We Landed by Moonlight*, the text of which was approved by Maurice Buckmaster prior to its publication in 1978.¹⁹ Verity's version seems to contradict Buckmaster's claim that he had authorised Déricourt as a double-agent since August 1943—unless, of course, Buckmaster was only pretending to be shocked by the charges laid against Déricourt, and was acting out an elaborate charade for Verity's benefit. This could explain why Déricourt appeared so unconcerned by the allegations. If what Buckmaster said during his *Panorama* interview is correct, reports that Déricourt was “in touch with the enemy” would hardly have come as a surprise, but then nor would it have been necessary to recall Déricourt so dramatically to account for his actions.

DÉRICOURT'S VERSION was that during his screening at the London Reception Centre in September 1942 he had told MI5 of his pre-War connections with German Intelligence, and his claim is confirmed by Lord Lansdowne of the Foreign Office (to Dame Irene Ward, in 1958). The official MI5 report on Déricourt, of 23 November 1942, makes no mention of it; but in any case, his arrival in London had been arranged by MI6, who knew all about the pre-War links with Boemelburg.

Déricourt has claimed that he fed Buckmaster the cover story about the visit from his *Lufthansa* friends and the introduction to Dr Goetz during his brief visit to England of 23 April–5 May 1943 to clear up a dispute over a badly-handled pick-up; and that Buckmaster had agreed he should pretend to cooperate with the Germans. If this were indeed so, Déricourt had neatly covered the tracks of his earlier liaison, for if anyone reported him to London for being in touch with the enemy, he could claim that it was done with Buckmaster's approval.

¹⁸ Sir Dick White, KCMG, CBE, OBE, Director General of MI5 1953–56, letter to the author, 1 May 1985.

¹⁹ Maurice Buckmaster, letter to the author, 25 May 1985. Hugh Verity, *We Landed by Moonlight* (1978), p. 165.

²⁰ Diamond smuggling crops up elsewhere in relation to SOE. In May 1943, Richard Christmann, a German agent posing as a member of Dutch SOE, was sent to Paris by Colonel Giskes on the official SOE escape route during Giskes' *Englandspiel*. Christmann says that when he reached Paris he had tried, without Giskes' knowledge or approval, to get in touch with Déricourt because he wanted to get some diamonds out of England and knew Déricourt could arrange this. He used Déricourt's code name, *Gilbert*, but was put in touch with the wrong *Gilbert*—Gilbert Norman of the *Prosper* network—and failed to meet Déricourt.

After the War, Déricourt told different stories to different people about the extent and purpose of his relationship with the Germans while he was working for SOE. For example, he told Hugh Verity and Maurice Buckmaster that he had been supplying his German contacts with black-market goods, including oranges, as a cover for his SOE duties. He told others, including French interrogators, that he had given the *Sicherheitsdienst* details of landing sites he knew would not be used by the RAF, so that the real locations would remain free for use. Obviously this was nonsense. The Germans were not so stupid as to allow Déricourt to feed them useless information while he was at the same time bringing in SOE agents elsewhere.

Déricourt also claimed that Bodington had been supplying him with diamonds to sell on the French black market, and even said he had given some to Boemelburg as a bribe. As with many of Déricourt's tales, there may be an element of truth here—SOE did sometimes use diamonds as a method of payment.²⁰

Déricourt argued then and later (and others on his behalf) that his record of safe landings and pick-ups was proof of his innocence. It proved no such thing. During the Dutch *Englandspiel*, Colonel Giskes had allowed downed Allied airmen to escape to Spain via SOE's *Golf* network, which was then completely under his control, so that London would believe everything was in order. Not surprisingly, on their safe return to England many Allied airmen praised the efficiency of the escape route.

THE DECISION OF THE SOE Tribunal that Déricourt should not return to France was based on a recommendation from MI5, who had two representatives present at the hearing. It was a view bitterly resented by Maurice Buckmaster, and by others in F Section, who wanted Déricourt to resume his duties as AMO.

MI5's opinion can be interpreted in two ways. First, that in view of the rumours about Déricourt, it was only prudent that he should not go back into the field. Second, that Déricourt had, unknown to SOE, been working for MI6 or for MI5's “Twenty Committee”; that his work was complete; and that this was an excellent opportunity of keeping him from returning to France. If there had remained the slightest suspicion that Déricourt had been involved in any kind of *unauthorised* contact with the enemy, there is little doubt that he would have spent the rest of the War in prison. The fact that he did not suggests that the Tribunal was satisfied, perhaps without being privy to the whole story, that Déricourt's activities had been sanctioned by *someone*, though not necessarily by Buckmaster or, indeed, by SOE.

AFTER THE Tribunal, Déricourt ceased to work for SOE, and for a while dropped out of sight. He later claimed that he and his wife remained in London, at the Savoy Hotel, while he passed back false information about *Overlord*, the forthcoming invasion of France, to his German contacts in Paris through a MI5 contact, Major R. A.

Warden. There is a germ of truth in this story—in so far as Warden did actually exist (though he worked for SOE, not MI5), and there was, of course, a complex deception plan called *Fortitude*, which successfully misled the Germans as to the Allies' intentions regarding the invasion, which finally took place in June 1944.

Déricourt's charmed life continued. In July 1944, he joined the Free French Air Force and, it is claimed in many accounts, flew Spitfires over enemy-occupied Europe. His log-book for this period shows, however, that he flew only light, single-engined, Auster communications aircraft. What is true is that in the course of these duties he was shot down over France and, though burned, survived and was awarded the *Croix de Guerre*.

On 13 February 1945, Déricourt joined Air France, flying the Paris-London route. He was arrested at Croydon Airport on 11 April 1946, shortly before taking off for Paris, after being found in possession of £1,420 in English pound notes, 20 lbs (9 kg) of platinum valued at £3,158, and 15 lbs (6.8 kg) of gold worth £1,500.²¹ This was a very large amount of bullion, worth considerably more than the official value if sold on the Continental black market, and was a most serious offence. After spending three days on remand in custody, Déricourt was granted bail in his own surety; he was allowed back to France on condition that he return to face trial.

Déricourt appeared in the Croydon magistrates' court on 23 April. He was represented by Curtiss Bennett, KC, who told the court that Déricourt had agreed to take the money and bullion out of England for a certain Robert Marshall he had met at the Savoy Hotel. The bullion, it was said, was needed to finance future activities of the French Resistance movement of which Déricourt was still a member. Although Déricourt was liable to a fine of up to £18,500 and imprisonment, the magistrates fined him only £500, which was paid on his behalf; they apparently did not confiscate either the notes or the bullion. The most likely explanation of this affair is that Déricourt was being paid off by British Intelligence, either for services rendered or for some future task, which accounted not only for his prestigious representation, but also for the magistrates' remarkable leniency.

AS A RESULT OF the Croydon affair, Déricourt lost his job with Air France, and remained unemployed until, in November 1946, he was arrested by the French military authorities, accused of betraying Agazarian to the Germans. He was held in custody until June 1948, when his court martial took place.

In court Déricourt claimed that he had been powerless to prevent Agazarian from keeping the appointment; he omitted to mention that it was Nicholas Bodington who had given Agazarian his orders. Bodington made a special journey to

France to appear at Déricourt's court martial, claiming that he represented British Intelligence. He told the court that Déricourt's statement about Agazarian was correct, and stated that he was in charge of Déricourt's work in France (which was untrue) and had authorised Déricourt to maintain his contacts with the *SD* (which was also untrue). The court was so impressed by Bodington's evidence that they acquitted Déricourt.

In his *Panorama* interview, Maurice Buckmaster claimed that Bodington's appearance at Déricourt's court martial

"was entirely his own personal responsibility, [and] was not known to, nor had any concern with, headquarters."

Buckmaster was, of course, referring to SOE headquarters, but this had been closed and its staff disbanded immediately after the end of the War. Had Bodington been told by MI6 to go to Paris and help clear Déricourt (which might explain why the court seemed to assume he was there in an official capacity)? Or was Bodington repaying his personal debt? The British Embassy in Paris, who sent an observer to the court martial, reported to London that Bodington's evidence was "a disgrace."

Not only did Bodington rush to Déricourt's defence, but the German witnesses (who included Boemelburg and Goetz) were very reluctant to testify against him; they seemed anxious to exonerate him from any wartime collaboration, dismissing his contacts with them as valueless. For whatever reason, no one appeared keen to see Déricourt convicted—perhaps because, as in many similar cases, the whole subject of French cooperation with the Germans during the Occupation contained too many skeletons in too many cupboards. On 7 June 1948 he was acquitted.

Despite his acquittal, Déricourt found it hard to get work as a pilot in France; after taking several jobs with small air charter companies, he ended up flying in Indo-China for the airline SAGETA. This company was formed in 1953 by the French airlines and the manufacturers of the *SE-2010* Armagnac airliner, SNCASE (for whom Déricourt had worked in 1940 as a test pilot), in order to maintain a regular supply-line from France to Saigon and Hanoi during the Indo-China war.²² On 20 November 1962, Déricourt was reported killed in a flying accident in Laos. But there have been claims from those who knew him well that his death was faked—that he assumed a new identity and went to live in Spain, where he remarried.

THE *PROSPER* NETWORK had been fully penetrated by the Germans as early as April 1943. Its final collapse, and the arrest of several hundred of its agents, together with large quantities of stores and equipment, was certainly due to information Déricourt had given the *SD*. But there was another important factor involved. Maurice Buckmaster has told me²³ that when Major Suttill was recalled to London in May 1943, he was summoned to a private meeting with Winston Churchill at which he was ordered to

"activate the work of the resistance in the Paris region,

²¹ *Croydon Times* (20 April 1946) and *Croydon Advertiser* (26 April 1946).

²² R. E. G. Davies, *History of the World's Airlines* (1964).

²³ Maurice Buckmaster, letter to the author, 26 October 1984.

regardless of security breaches, in order that Stalin might be appeased.”

Clearly the *Starkey* deception plan was being put into action. Buckmaster says that, after this meeting:

“Suttill knew he risked his life, and cheerfully sacrificed himself in the call of duty.”

Others, however, recall that Suttill, returning to France on 20 June 1943, was profoundly gloomy about the future and openly declared—though giving no reason—that he and his network of agents were doomed.

It was at about this time that Maurice Buckmaster was told that an invasion of France would take place in the autumn of 1943; like everyone else in *F* Section, he believed this to be genuine information, and he has confirmed to me that he knew nothing about *Cockade*. *F* Section had gradually become emeshed in the complex and dangerous game of bluff.²⁴ Without full knowledge, its agents were ordered to deliberately trail their coats in front of the Germans as they prepared for the non-existent “Second Front.”

IN THE PAST, suggestions that Déricourt was part of some larger intelligence operation, outside and unknown to SOE, have been dismissed as fanciful inventions on the grounds that no records exist to substantiate such claims. There is, however, a tendency for certain SOE historians to deride any viewpoint that does not accord with their own.

Apart from the direct links between Déricourt and MI6, which were unknown to SOE, there is now clear evidence—contrary to the claims by both M. R. D. Foot and the official SOE archivist²⁵ that SOE was never involved in any deception scheme—that SOE was unwittingly involved in the *Cockade* plan of the Political Warfare Executive (the agency for which Bodington had previously worked and where he returned after the fiasco of his Paris visit). We have Maurice Buckmaster’s account of Major Suttill’s meeting with Churchill in May 1943; and another *F* Section agent, John Starr,²⁶ was also briefed about the non-existent invasion at this time. He was told to hold out for 48 hours if captured and was then dropped into a network already penetrated by the Germans. Starr was indeed captured, was interrogated by the Gestapo, and was sent to Mauthausen concentration camp. Happily, he managed to survive.

²⁴ Maurice Buckmaster, *They Fought Alone* (1958), Ch. 9; letter to the author, 12 October 1984.

²⁵ Christopher Woods, letter to the author, 20 November 1984.

²⁶ J. Overton Fuller, *The Starr Affair* (1954), pp. 66-67.

²⁷ J. Overton Fuller, *Double Webs* (1958), *Double Agent?* (1961). Hugh Verity, *We Landed by Moonlight*, p. 166.

²⁸ I am most grateful to Colonel Maurice Buckmaster OBE, John Costello, Richard Deacon, M. R. D. Foot, Jean Overton Fuller, Cherry Hughes, T. R. Padfield (Public Record Office), Nigel West, Sir Dick White, and Christopher Woods (Foreign Office) for their valuable comments and assistance in preparing this article. I am also greatly indebted to Roy Davies and Robert Marshall, of BBC Television, for allowing me access to their additional research material obtained in the course of producing the *Timewatch* film based on this article, which will be shown on BBC-2 on 1 May 1986.

After the War, Déricourt was to admit that he had betrayed four agents—Colonel Bonoteaux, Jean Manesson, Paul Pardi, and Jean Maugenet²⁷—but this was certainly not the complete total. Quite apart from the *Prosper* network, his activities contributed to the arrest, and subsequent death, of many other SOE agents, including Miss Noor Inyat Khan, GC. Considering the evidence on which some people were executed, it is surprising that Déricourt was not one of them.

At first sight, the idea of briefing agents with false information about a bogus invasion, and then betraying them to the enemy so that this knowledge would be extracted in a way that would ensure its credibility, is too horrific and preposterous to take seriously. Yet the *Cockade* documents show that agents in *F* Section, including Buckmaster himself, and others like Starr, were briefed with false information—and Déricourt certainly betrayed many agents, yet escaped any form of punishment. Too much of a coincidence?

IT SEEMS TO ME QUITE CLEAR that Maurice Buckmaster knew nothing about Déricourt’s work for MI6 until after the War when, very loyally, he concealed the fact that Nicholas Bodington had deceived him. Bodington’s earlier work for PWE, before he joined SOE, doubtless led to the suggestion that some of *F* Section’s agents should be used as tethered goats for *Cockade*. Whatever Buckmaster felt about Bodington, dismissal from SOE evidently did Bodington no harm, for he simply returned to work at PWE. In June 1944, he was back in France with another clandestine sabotage team, which had no connection with SOE, but was under the control of MI6.

DÉRICOURT’S ROLE in SOE²⁸ left a deep scar in many memories. Even today, inquiries about him are met with embarrassment, evasion, and occasionally a demand that the true story should not be told.

If Déricourt was not a brave and clever double-agent—walking the slippery tightrope between truth and deceit with a dangerous enemy, and ordered by MI6 to betray some of SOE’s agents in the process—he was a clever traitor. And then the question remains: how did he manage to get away with activities that were the subject of so many reports to London?

While Déricourt may have been a plausible opportunist who dabbled in smuggled diamonds and the black market, he was also the person with the right contacts at the right time, and was called upon to perform some very dirty tricks in a very dirty war, when the sacrifice of a few hundred agents had to be set against the long-term objective of defeating the Nazis at all costs. In conversations after the War, Déricourt insisted that, if the truth were known, it would be realised that although he did monstrous things, he was not a monster.

The whole question of whether anyone authorised his liaison with the Germans is discreetly omitted from all accounts of Déricourt’s Tribunal, including that in the official history of SOE. If his contacts were unauthorised, then they

plainly constituted treachery. If they *were* authorised, or if some senior person knew the truth about them, then who was this person—and did he have the right to allow aircraft and agents to continue using pick-up points when he knew details of each landing were being given to the Germans in advance? Did this person know about, and approve, Déricourt passing copies of SOE radio messages to the enemy?

With all covert intelligence operations—whether in war or in peace—provided the objective is successfully achieved no one will inquire too closely into precisely how this was accomplished. When things go wrong, whether with wartime deception schemes like *Cockade*, or a peacetime attack on a ship in a New Zealand harbour, cover stories have to be

devised to deflect criticism from those who authorised the plan.

Ironically, the Germans never did believe in *Cockade*. Hitler was so sure it was a bluff that he ordered the withdrawal of 27 divisions from Western Command for service in Russia, Italy, and the Balkans.²⁹ But the false briefings had caused many agents to lower their guard and prematurely expose themselves, or be exposed by others, to an alerted enemy who wreaked a terrible retribution through their ranks.

In the balance-sheet of war, with the ultimate success of D-Day the following year, when the *Fortitude* deception plan worked so well, it may seem a small price to have paid. But for the men and women who went to their deaths, often alone and in horrific circumstances in faraway places, it was a pointless and unnecessary sacrifice.

²⁹ *Enemy Reactions to Starkey*, COSSAC 41/DX/Int files, MMR, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Railway Embankments

The life of railway embankments,
mostly a life passed, except
when a train stops and waits and waits

and none speaks or leans out
into the solid foreign landscape
bigger than life. "Still life

with Russell lupin and active bee."
And its own timetable. In time
it could well take us in, moss

having a quiet but steely claim
on wheels that have lost the will to turn.
We wait, exhibits from another age.

II

The life of railway embankments,
private, like dreams we pass
night after night but can't touch.

The life of willow-herb, rust,
hot stones. My father said
"Walk on the sleepers, not the ash."

The step was too short for him.
Too long for me. The tips
of our fishing-rods bounced at odds.

Robin Fulton

Jack Curtis

At Thirteen

WE ALL WENT UPTOWN to the fanciest sporting-goods store in the city and my father told the clerk to outfit me for fishing in Alaska.

My mother said, "Completely and without regard to cost."

My father glared at mother but said only, "He can carry only so much on the plane."

The little dark-skinned clerk knew the general field from reading tackle catalogues and he carefully chose three rods in tubes, three reels to match, several sizes of monofilament and tapered leaders, a grand assortment of lures and flies and the rest of the hardware.

Meanwhile my mother strolled through the store emanating contempt, staying away from my father as far as possible. My father pretended she wasn't there, pretended to know something about what we were buying, pretended to know something about life and money and family.

I was thirteen, wonderfully thin and gangly, and I knew less than either of them.

I only knew that I was going to visit Grandfather Walter and that my mother would be returning to London and my father would be travelling elsewhere and we wouldn't be seeing each other so much. I was told that, but I couldn't believe it.

"I know you're a bit young", my mother had explained with a certain remote quality in her voice, "but you have to grow up sometime, alas."

My father had equivocated. "Who knows? Maybe it'll all blow over. Your mother is a creature of many moods."

I had no choice but to visit Grandfather Walter in Alaska which in itself was an adventure, but to come back to a boarding-school in Vermont was simply beyond comprehension.

At the airport I said, "Please try to get it together before fall and we'll be OK."

They stared at each other with the loathing and viciousness they'd been screaming about all winter and my mother said, "You're going to have to face the simple fact that your father and I are not compatible."

"She's right, Neil", my father said, "but anything you need, all you have to do is pick up the phone."

"No. You'll work it out." I tried a smile, but they'd gone too far down their separate roads for that shaky smile to bring them back.

"You can come to London, dear Neil", my mother said, "just as soon as I'm settled in."

"I want to come back to New York and live in the apartment", I said.

The departure was announced, cutting off any more of my plea, but I still believed that they were my loving parents anxious about my happiness.

AT THE AIRPORT in Anchorage, Grandfather Walter shook hands with me, and when the luggage arrived, he asked about the new fishing equipment.

"My father thought I'd like the fishing", I said. "They bought me a camera to take pictures of the catch."

"My son has more money than sense", Grandfather Walter said in a gruff, disturbing voice.

He was a very big man and his face was blunt as a brick and marked with several scars of past assaults. His voice at times suggested the biggest bear in the world growling from deep inside a cave. He threw the equipment and my violin case into the back of a pickup truck that badly wanted a wash.

"I told them on the phone that there's no damn fish in my lake."

"They said it was full of all kinds of fish, big fish, almost as big as I", I said confidently. I noticed that he had lost two fingers on his left hand.

"My boy", he said with some kindness, "your father has never been to Alaska nor has your mother, who I have not even met and no doubt never will."

"I think as soon as they work things out, they'll come and get me."

He looked at me a long time and almost ran off the dirt road.

"Son, that's a bunch of horse biscuit and you better believe it", he said in as gentle a voice as a giant bear could find.

"I'm not worried about it." I tried my shaky smile but I felt a cloud come over my confidence.

"If you're going to pretend something, Neil", he said, "you'd be ahead of the game to pretend they were both killed in a plane crash a long time ago."

I forced a laugh, changed the subject which con-

tained too much simple fear, and asked, "How did you lose your fingers?"

"I was dreaming about something", he snorted. "Probably your grandmother. Had my hand hanging back over the seat of a nice big bulldozer and backed into a pine tree. Smashed the whole hand but a good doctor saved most of it."

"You didn't like my grandmother?" I asked.

"I thought you wanted to know about my hand. I had to put the cat forward from reverse, and when my hand was free, I crawled down to the ground and threw up", he growled.

"My father lived with grandmother after you separated?"

"The rotten system", he said. "And boy, didn't she bleed me, didn't she like to write letters about how refined life was, how much she adored Argentinians. Can you imagine!" He swore an awful oath for which he apologised, and then asked, "How'd we get on to this subject anyways?"

"One always likes to know of one's antecedents, don't you know?"

"Where'd you get that kind of talk? By Christ, you sound like a goddamned limey!"

"I suppose it comes from mother. She's English, of course."

"Holy suffering Mary", he growled again from his deep cave, "a mickimucki limey!"

THE DIRT ROAD, much of it mud mastered by the four-wheel drive, was lined by tall hemlocks and spruce, and the air was fresh as wildflowers and clear as gin.

Grandfather Walter gripped the steering-wheel carelessly and seemed to enjoy challenging the quagmires by slamming into the deepest parts on purpose, muttering tremendous obscenities and playing the throttle like a fiddle as he guided the truck through.

"Are you thick-headed or just stubborn?"

"I don't quite know what you mean", I responded carefully.

"I mean I'm stubborn, but I ain't stupid", he said. "I think stubbornness is a virtue. It costs considerable but in the end it pays off."

"I don't rightly know yet. Perhaps after I've caught a few of your non-existent fish, we'll find out." I tried to smile again.

"Aaaargh", he growled. "If you catch a fish out of my lake, I'll kiss your foot."

"It stands to reason, don't you know", I stammered under the pressure of meeting this huge scarred man's massive statement, "that if Alaska is so very fishable, then its parts are as well."

He didn't answer. I think he liked the idea that he hadn't bluffed me down with his bigness. I felt a sense of unspoken approval.

And I felt that I had met a man who meant to share his experience with me if only because I needed it. Another way of saying that I felt secure.

We turned abruptly from the main road into a rutted lane bulldozed out of the wilderness. And in a few minutes we arrived at a lodge made of peeled logs. It was as ample as Grandfather Walter. He thought in big dimensions.

"Did you build it yourself?"

"I did, and I did it in one summer", he said, and added, "Now listen to me, youngster. I have an Eskimo woman who takes care of my needs, and she is a first-class person, nothing less. Understand?"

"Yes, sir", I said, trying to act properly unsurprised. I'd not thought about his need for an attendant.

He treated the fishing gear a bit roughly, I thought, but in a few minutes the truck was unloaded and I was introduced to Nomi, an attractive lady in her early thirties perhaps, rather tall, I thought, to be an Eskimo, and her features seemed to be a bit elongated as Scandinavian faces are, making her appear much more attractive than say a dumpy little panda bear in a parka.

My first impression was that she stood quite straight and that her dark amber eyes had swallowed me up in a gulp.

The floor was wooden, the walls were varnished logs, the ceiling was some kind of insulating plywood. On the walls were framed designs in various furs so intricately finished, I couldn't ever understand how Nomi had done them. Suffice it that they were geometric, very bold, colourful, and perfectly suited to the big room with its great fireplace.

The guest room was quite proper with its own bath, and the rugs were brown bearskins. There was a casualness, a carelessness about the whole home, what with its stacks of newspapers and periodicals scattered about, and various notes on construction projects which must remain undisturbed until Grandfather Walter made sense of them and swept them away. Yet in the way of cleanliness, Nomi worked unobtrusively but with a definite determination to keep the place immaculate.

After a dinner of moosemeat and potatoes, Grandfather Walter said, "You'll be here all summer so there's no big hurry about anything. I'm running a job on a pipeline about ten miles south of here. You can come along or you can hang around here."

"I think perhaps I'd prefer to just work it out here for a day or so if you don't mind", I said. And I was rewarded by a look of relief.

"One of these days maybe you'll get settled down enough to quit stuttering." He smiled, his statement not at all derisive or humiliating. It was simply quite real.

"I wasn't aware, Grandfather Walter, that I had a stutter."

"That's why I told you. It's not necessary here and makes no difference to me, but it will to you."

"Yes, sir", I said.

"Around here", Nomi smiled, "we're all content and happy."

"Why is that?" I asked.

She had to think a moment. "Because we are living in a wilderness and we are stronger than most people maybe. I never been anywhere."

"You don't need to go anywhere, lady", Grandfather Walter put the gravel back in his throat. "You're smart enough to know everything just by looking out the front yard."

I went to bed in a thorough state of exhaustion. I had left New York City early in the morning and been welcomed into a most unusual family in a completely unfamiliar country, all in one day. I didn't hear Grandfather drive off to work. I didn't waken until the sun burned into my eyes through the curtains, and I felt proper guilty at having not wished him a good day.

Yet Nomi was quite pleasant, giving me a great breakfast of eggs and smoked salmon and bread she'd baked herself. She hadn't a lot to say, but one didn't see that as any sort of hostility, only a pleasant reserve not to be wasted.

The big room with its deck overlooked a lovely lake which though not very large, still would take a day at least to walk around. It looked like ideal fishing to me.

I found my equipment and undid the plastic envelopes for what I hoped might be adequate armament to conquer the invisible fish. I took several flies and spinners and plastic worms and assembled a rod and reel that would offer them to the fish.

When I thought I was prepared, I told Nomi I was going fishing.

"Where?" she asked.

"In the lake."

"Good luck."

I could see the merriment in her beautiful brown eyes.

I LAUGHED and excused myself and walked down to the shore. Understandably it took some time to learn how to cast. I mean I was intelligent enough to know that one could only be experienced by practising a lot as with the violin. I had enough time and I practised quite a lot. I lost some of the lures in the trees and from tying poor knots, but in a few hours I was able to cast and retrieve the lures rather well. After all, I wasn't a mental basket case, I proudly assured myself.

I knew I was alone, but I assumed that was temporary, that my mother and father would write a letter telling me all was well and to have a good time.

They had fought hard and long, screaming recriminations, accusations, demanding accountings. I thought they could jolly well settle it in my absence. In September I would return to the apartment and go off to school every day as I had done for seven years.

So I caught no fish the first day, but I'd had no great expectations either, so there was nothing lost. Now that

I had a fair enough technique, I thought I should be catching fish soon.

Of course I didn't know what I was fishing for.

At dinner that night, which was a great roast of wild goose and cranberries and mashed potatoes, I asked Grandfather Walter about it.

"Are there grayling or trout, I mean, what sort of fish should I be trying to catch?"

"Look, my boy", he laughed, "there ain't a goddamn fish in this lake. I told you. I've asked Eskimos that have great-grandfathers and nobody ever caught a fish out of here."

"So I can just use any lure I want."

"I would say that is absolutely true."

I thought I saw an affectionate whimsy in his eyes. He'd had a hard day on the job and in the summers worked long hours so that we all went to bed quite early.

And whereas he rose very early, I had not to, and continued my idyll of lazy awakening, magnificent breakfasts, and easy fishing from various shores of the lake which I began to know rather well.

There were a few beavers living there that liked to slap the water with their tails when I arrived, and there were loons that cried a terrible haunting sound. Their red plumage at the neck looked like fresh wounds. There were a few shy brown bears and equally distant moose.

The more I became involved in country living, the less I fished. Often Grandfather Walter would take me along to his project if he thought it might be an interesting day, and other times when he was free he would drive all of us to visit friends either on down the coast or in Anchorage or perhaps over toward Mt Denali.

He and Nomi both did their best to see that I was healthy and happily occupied. I went along assuming that my parents would patch up their problems and were ready to have me back.

After I received a letter from mother who seemed very busy in London, I went back to fishing the lake alone. I caught nothing. No fish ever jumped, no birds ever caught anything that I could see. Still, it was such a lovely lake I felt there simply had to be fish because they belonged in it.

Grandfather Walter didn't appreciate my odd curiosity. When we spoke of our daily affairs, he seemed to become quite gloomy after I'd discussed my day's fishing.

"I told you there were no fish in that lake."

"Can anyone be so sure?"

"I am sure. I am so goddamned sure that I'm going to show you a lake that has fish in it. Then you'll see the difference."

The next Sunday we loaded his aluminium boat into the truck and, leaving Nomi at home, he drove us over a logging road I hadn't seen before. We climbed up over a forested ridge and dropped down to another perfect jewel of a lake.

There was no sign of a human being anywhere. We

motored away from shore and put small spinners on our lines.

"Get ready", Grandfather smiled.

The fish nearly pulled the rod from my hands. I'd had no idea of the strength or ferocity. Grandfather stopped the boat and laughed as I tried to handle the unknown assailant on the other end of my line.

"Fight it out", he said. "Don't just reel him in."

And in a few minutes I knew what he was talking about. You played a game of keeping the line somewhat tense but not cable tight. You wished to give the fish some room to move in but not too much. And when at last he splashed to the surface still determined to run away, I could only give him my greatest admiration. A big trout, four pounds at least Grandfather Walter said as I drew the fish closer and it tiredly accepted the net that lifted him into the boat.

"Now that's a good fish. Rainbow. You see what I'm talking about now?"

"I see it, yes", I said, trying not to stammer, "but I don't quite understand it."

"You will", he growled back at me, and started the boat moving again.

His idea was to show me a lake that contained many fish, and by day's end we had nearly fifty large trout which all but sank the boat. That it was an illegal number did not concern him. They would not be wasted. What we didn't eat that evening went into the freezer.

BEFORE I WENT TO SLEEP that night, I thought that perhaps I was like the hooked fish fighting for my freedom, struggling for my usual comforts, battling as it were to stay in my usual environment, but the great fisherman at the other end had control, not me.

I could not accept it. Hardly had the thought crossed my mind than it was discarded and hidden away.

Why would anyone want to hurt a nice boy like me?

He had shown me how to operate the outboard motor, and a few days later when I asked permission to take the boat out on the lake, his face seemed to collapse for a moment.

"You mean to go fishing?"

"Might as well give it a go." I smiled a bit shakily.

He shook his head and said sadly, "You just won't believe me. You won't believe anyone. You're hiding from your problem by fishing for nothing. But, Neil, my dear grandson, sooner or later reality is going to hit you over the head with a sledge-hammer."

"You'd rather I shouldn't try to troll the lake?" I stammered, trying to accommodate reality's sledge-hammer.

"No. I want you to", he said quickly. "I'll put the boat in the water and see that it's full of gas. I want you to troll every damned inch of this lake, and then I want you to admit there are no fish in it."

"Yes, sir", I said. "Thank you, sir."

He shook his head slowly and said, "Boy, you scare the hell out of me."

Next day after my usual grand breakfast which Nomi quietly prepared for me, I managed to start the motor, and trolled as we had done in the other lake. But I had no luck, not a bite, nothing. It appeared to be a totally dead lake despite its beauty and purity.

I wondered if we might not be able to stock the lake.

"I tried it three times", he said. "I put all kinds of fish in this lake but something always killed them. Maybe it's too shallow and freezes too hard in the winter. Anyway, trying to stock it is a waste of time."

"It is so beautiful at sundown", I said, "and in the morning. The water is so calm and clear."

"Yes," he said, understanding. "That's why I bought this property. I didn't check to see if the lake was alive or not. It was such a fine thing, and I'm not bitching that much either. It's still a perfect wonder at peace. But you do believe me now."

"You wouldn't mind if I just went around and whipped the water a bit more?" I asked tentatively, hoping he wouldn't explode with exasperation.

"It's your life", he said, with big lines of tiredness showing around his eyes. "I had a letter from your father today. He has paid your tuition at the Vermont school."

"If you don't mind, I'd rather not talk about it", I said and went to bed.

How could my parents be so obdurate? Why couldn't they understand my distress, that I'd had a jolly good lesson and now let us get on with life?

I wished very much to spit out the hook that seemed to inexorably bring me from one place to another I didn't know and therefore didn't like.

I didn't sleep so well that night or many nights afterwards. Yet I had learned a proposition somewhere in my toddling days which was that one doesn't ever give up.

At a time during that summer, they said the day was twenty-four hours of daylight, and indeed the days were quite long but the let-down of seeing the days grow shorter may not be worth that unique wonder. How quickly the season changed, how fast the cabbages grew that Nomi chopped into sauerkraut. How chilled the hours of darkness became. How the gloom in my grandfather's face deepened, and the other half of me sank like a dead body into a dead lake.

One afternoon late, when I was casting a wet fly into a tangle of logs, thinking I was alone, he came up behind me like a great bear and said, "How you doing?"

"No better", I smiled, "but one must keep a stiff upper lip."

"One must not do a goddamned thing", he said.

"Really."

"I told you the damned lake is an extinct desert for fish."

"Still . . ." I demurred.

"Now don't give me no more mickimucki. I brought

something from the project which I hope to hell will prove my point and doesn't get us both killed. What I'm saying, there is no hope in this lake. Other lakes maybe, but not this one."

"It's an opinion I respect", I said carefully.

"In the boat, you stubborn sucker", he growled from deep in the cave.

WE MOTORED out into the capriciously lovely lake and he opened up his package and pulled out a device in a plastic bag and displayed its parts to me.

"This, my friend, is a rock", he roared, a teacher doing his level best to prove a theorem. "This rock is tied to six sticks of dynamite. Attached to these sticks of dynamite is an explosive cap and attached to that is a waterproof fuse which, if you will please observe, I am now going to light."

"I observe", I whispered as he touched the lighted match to the tube of powder.

"Now we shall goddamn demonstrate that there is nothing alive in this obviously empty lake!"

He studied the burning fuse, decided it burned to his liking and tossed it overboard. Laughing to himself or the world in general, he turned the throttle full up. The boat rose in the bow as we sped toward shore.

The explosion was magnificent. The geyser of spray was, in a word, big enough to stun most of the lake. The waves nearly swamped us.

Such a look of happiness on that craggy scarred face! He was wholly delighted, as if he'd played a grand joke.

Once the bomb had gone off, he turned the boat back. He criss-crossed the region of the explosion several times, saying nothing, and finally, when he thought I'd got the point, he said, "You see anything?"

"No, sir", I replied.

"No dead fish?"

"No."

"Loch Ness monsters?"

I smiled and shook my head.

We motored back to shore. Grandfather's head was high and pure. He had, he thought, proven his point.

I prepped my spirit every morning, saying that I would practise the violin a bit and then fish a bit and then help Nomi in the garden until Grandfather Walter returned for dinner. Then I would read a bit of mathematics and go to bed.

But it was not so easy, you know, because some part of me was peeling off, a large skin or scab or something like that seemed to be falling away from me and the remainder was quite tender and unsure.

Grandfather Walter appeared to be deeply worried about me. He never said an unkind or even a tactless word despite the severity of his personality, but it showed in the growing depression he exhibited.

"My boy", he said one evening while Nomi was in the kitchen. "would you like a girl?"

I was stunned by the thought which I did not totally even comprehend. "I'm not sure", I said.

"Nomi has a cousin cute as a bug, about your age."

I then realised what he was talking about. "If you don't mind awfully", I said, "perhaps we can postpone it."

"Just as you say, I don't mean to hurry you." He nodded his great keg of a head judiciously. "You understand, I don't know a hell of a lot about proper young men."

"Yes, sir. I suspect we're not a lot different from any others, but perhaps we shouldn't rush."

I realised then that he was talking my language, stammering a bit to give his sentences time to gain weight.

GREAT OWLS were about that night singing to the smaller animals, enticing them to dine. And I heard them for many hours, the cool question and the quick shriek of acceptance. I would not accept.

Yet the summer itself was drifting by. The days became shorter, the sun so much weaker, and one day Grandfather Walter said that my plane would leave in a week because we were in September.

"I say, could I stay on?"

"You know that's what I want. But I am not directing the world." Suddenly he was angry with himself and the way things were out of hand. "I have never played a fiddle and I flunked Arithmetic. I was a dumb paratrooper who learned to be a catskiner and that's it. You understand?"

"Yes, sir", I said, not understanding, but most humble before his rage at the world. "I'm rather proud to be your grandson."

"Well, OK. I'd say stay on. You're the most talented kid I ever saw, but it's wrong because there ain't a school for twenty miles. You'd have to go to boarding-school in Anchorage. Well, hell, son, the school is terrible. Vermont is where you ought to be and I can't work out anything else, unless you want to stick around here and do nothing. No. There ain't no way out for you except to do what they said. What's best maybe, depending on how you see it, is to come visit us when you want."

What a long speech he'd been brewing and bottling all summer, but his intensity and the degree of his thought and love were the real message. He did really care about me! And I noticed off to one side that tall straight Nomi was crying. Now I say, that is a lot in the world of thirteen-year-olds.

Word from Mum that evening, a note appended to a letter to Grandfather, assuring me that all was well, that I was to be in Vermont in two days, that they had looked hard and long for what was best for me and the money didn't matter so long as I understood.

Understood what!

Good Lord, I understood nothing. I only wanted my bed in my room in our apartment and three meals a day.

I went fishing next morning. The solitude of fishing is an extra healing dimension, I discovered. The identity of a person is extended into a dark unexplored cave of time that no one except fisher people understands.

The beaver banged their tails, the loons cried sadly, the woods answered with blotter-like silence and I teased the lakeshore with a most expensive leaded line and tapered leader.

And that night, only a few hours before I was to leave, I showed Grandfather Walter the broken section of my rod.

"He is exactly that long", I said strongly. "He is a crusty, warted fish with a scoop of a mouth and I

caught the bloody monster with a frog!"

Grandfather Walter examined the ruined length of fibreglass, evading my attack.

"Are you sure?"

"I measured him on my rod for want of anything else and broke it off right there."

"The fish?"

"He's alive. I released him. He's eaten all your plantings. He's four feet two inches long and hungry. You've got to catch him or he'll never let loose."

"You stubborn mickimucki, why didn't you kill him?"

"Because he's yours." I smiled. "He's there and he's yours to catch. Believe me."

"Yes, sir", he sighed and looked me square in the eye. "I believe you."

Cat's Whisker

"Cat got your tongue?"

I'd lie low on the hearthrug until she padded in. Charmer and snake in one, she'd coil up snug beside me.

I could talk to her,
with her lithe knowing silences,
no questions asked, only the whurr
of a finely tuned apparatus

idling. "Is it true?"
I whispered, "You see ghosts?" She seemed
to smile. (Then again, cats always do.)
But the family's day-long "atmospheres"

pained her: that slow build
and itch of static in grown-up altitudes
above my head. She flexed. Yawned. Bristled.
We were bad music to her. Yes, she knew

what wavelengths lace the air,
somehow. The first twitch of her whiskers
was the sign. She'd be stroked anywhere
but there. Cat's-whisker: the encyclopaedia

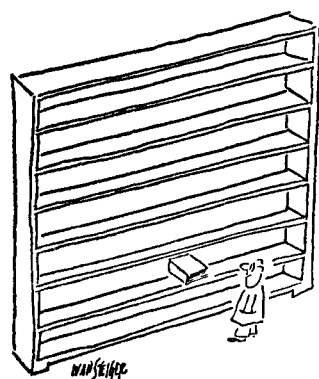
showed a crystal set, a family
bent close. Cack-rackle, hiss, a jumbling
rush of atmospherics. . . . Then, haltingly
at first, this small voice, coming
through.

Philip Gross

Bryan Magee

The Language of Politics

Words Fail Us



MY THEME concerns certain political concepts and categories, which we all use, from the standpoint of the effects they have on what we take reality to be. My central thesis is that the world is now changing so fast that we all have a tendency to see it in terms that have been left behind by events and are therefore outmoded, and that one

of the ways in which this shows itself is in our use of an exhausted political vocabulary, a vocabulary whose key terms were coined many generations ago in a society quite different from the one in which we live today. I also believe that this use by us of outmoded models, categories and concepts can and often does cause us to act in ways which are inappropriate to our situation, and therefore has important consequences.

In much of today's world, not only in Britain, political discussion takes place to an important degree in such terms as: "Socialist", "Liberal", and "Conservative"; "trade unions" and "cooperatives"; "Left", "Right", and "Centre"; "Communism" and "Capitalism." Almost every one of these terms dates from the early 19th century; in fact in the English language more than half of them can be traced to a single decade—the 1830s. The *Oxford English Dictionary* ascribes the first known use of the word "Conservative" in our familiar political sense to the year 1830, and "Conservatism" to 1835. The first known use of the word "Socialist" in English is 1833, and "Socialism" 1835. The first known use of "trade union" is also 1835. (So we have the extraordinary fact that the terms "Conservatism", "Socialism", and "trade union" all date their traceable entry into the English language to the same year.) The first known use of "Left", "Right", and "Centre" with their political connotations is only two

years later, 1837. And only a very few years after that come the first appearances of "Communism" and "Communist", in the period 1840-43. "Liberalism" is a little earlier than all these (1819), and "Liberal" earlier still (1801). Earliest of all is "Capitalist", which first appears in 1792.

It is, of course, only the first known appearances of these words in the English language that the *Oxford Dictionary* records for us. Some of them came to us from other languages, French in particular, where they therefore appeared earlier. But the gap is not great. The first known use anywhere of the term "Socialist" is in French, and dates from 1832, only one year before its appearance in English. The political use of the terms "Left", "Right", and "Centre" derived ultimately from the seating arrangements in the French National Assembly of 1789, but it was quite a few years before they acquired their now familiar connotations even in French.¹

I want to emphasise that my greatest concern is not with the words so much as with the ways of looking at politics and at society in which they function as key terms. The point, of which the history of the words is merely an illustration, is that we are still, in the last few years of the 20th century, conducting our political affairs to a very considerable extent in terms of concepts and categories that were products of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

An Exhausted Terminology

THROUGHOUT THE WEST the most familiar kinds of political party today are Conservative, Liberal, Socialist and Communist parties, and parties which straddle the particular divides created by the use of those categories. Today's Social Democrats, for instance, both here and abroad, straddle the Socialist and Liberal traditions. In many cases the words themselves provide the names of the parties: in Britain a Conservative, a Liberal, and a Communist Party. And even where the party labels are different, the terms often provide the staple of actual discussion.

In the British Labour Party, for example, there is perpetual discussion of "Socialism", and the more active members habitually categorise both policies and each other not only as "Left", "Right", or "Centre", but with such further refinements as "Centre Right", "Centre Left", "Soft Left",

¹ It is worth stressing, even aside from this, that by citing the *Dictionary's* dates for the first known use of these terms in English I am far from suggesting that the concepts they denote sprang into existence overnight with the coining of the words. They were living, emerging categories of thought, with important and long antecedents. But even making full allowance for all that, one cannot but be struck by the extremely narrow period in time shared by their beginnings.

and "Hard Left." In the USA the names of the main parties may be "Republican" and "Democrat", but administrations, and the men and measures that comprise them, are every day talked of in terms of being more or less "conservative", more or less "liberal", more or less "Right" or "Left"; as are political parties in Western Europe.

Only "Fascist" can be said to be a 20th-century product, and this may well be the most misused, indeed abused, of all such political terms. One would be hard put to pin down a body of ideas which is specifically "Fascist", and Fascism may not be a phenomenon which has any very serious intellectual aspect to it at all. Historically it seems to me to be a reaction in the literal sense of that word, the most extreme, violent, and ruthless form of reaction to the possibility of a Communist accession to power. This is indeed how Communists themselves analyse it. And it would seem to follow from this that only where there is a serious possibility of a Communist accession to power are there likely to be serious Fascists in considerable numbers. The phenomenon exists most notably in today's world in parts of Latin America and on the fringes of South-east Asia.

Given this highly localised relationship of Fascism to Communism, the unintellectual (not to say anti-intellectual) character of Fascism serves to set it at the margin of most general discussion nowadays about the moving power of political ideas. The very term seems to be falling out of the active vocabulary of most of our population. People of Far Left opinions tend to use it a good deal: given their view of the matter they have a natural tendency to equate any firm opposition to themselves with Fascism, especially when angry.

The most historically recent terms which are still in everyday use, both here and internationally, to denote a political attitude or approach or movement or party are the term "Marxist" and the term "Social Democrat." "Social Democrat" was first used in English in 1877, but then and for a long time subsequently it meant "Socialist." Only after the rise to power of Social Democratic parties in Scandinavia between the two World Wars did the term begin to acquire more liberal connotations, and then only slowly. The term "Marxist" came into use internationally at about the same time as the term "Social Democrat", namely in the latter years of Karl Marx's life. But he, of course, died more than a century ago (in 1883), and produced his most influential work significantly earlier. Living as we do in a world in which not a few people regard Marxism as the most "modern", the most "progressive", the most future-orientated political approach available, there is something wry in the reflection that it is a thought-system created in the early and mid-Victorian era.

Right across the board, then—whether we are thinking in terms of tightly organised and articulated philosophies such as Marxism, or more broadly conceived traditions of political thought such as are denoted by words like "Socialism" and

"Liberalism", or even just everyday commonsense talk about "the Conservatives" and "the trade unions"—we are operating with concepts and categories (and these, we must remember, are ways of looking at things) which are nearly all between one and two hundred years old.

Concepts as Blinkers

WHEN THE TERMS WERE COINED and for a long time afterwards, people knew what they meant, or thought they did with a reasonable degree of approximation. But since then the world has changed more radically and unexpectedly than in almost any comparable stretch of its history. Yet we are still trying to operate with the same old terms—with the inevitable result that their use has become a breeding-ground of confusion.²

For instance, do we in Britain today live in a "Capitalist" society? The answer is not in the least clear. Marxists will say: "Yes, of course we do! Three-quarters or more of the economy is privately owned, and more still is about to be privatised by a Conservative government. And there are substantial private sectors in education, medicine, housing, insurance, pensions, newspapers, broadcasting, the arts—yes, of course this is Capitalism!"

But there are at least as many others who will say: "How can you call it Capitalism when between a fifth and a quarter of the economy, including nearly all the basic industries, is publicly owned, and when the Government assumes responsibility for all important macro-economic decisions, including control of the price level, the inflation level, and the employment level, and for these purposes intervenes wholesale in the private sector? And when there are free national health and education services open to everybody, and public housing on an enormous scale, and a welfare state? Surely on any straightforward use of terms all this is highly Socialistic?" And one would have to concede that to individuals of any political persuasion at all before the Second World War a society that could be described truthfully in the terms I have just used would have looked, if not like "Socialism", then at least like "semi-Socialism."

But what, now, is Socialism? No two can agree about that either. The Communist countries always refer to themselves and each other as "Socialist", but most Socialists in the West declare themselves implacably opposed to any such form of society. And if there is one thing more than another that characterises Western Socialist parties it is internal division about the sort of society they are aiming at. Among members of the British Labour Party, disputes about "what Socialism is" are endemic. A substantial and highly contentious literature exists on the subject.

Similarly, the terms "Right" and "Left" are losing their purchase. Under conventions established earlier in our century, people on the Far Right are seen as "Fascists" and people on the Far Left as "Communists", so that on the Left-Right axis the two are supposed to be opposites, or at least at opposite extremes, as far away from each other as it is possible to get. But a majority of observers seems to agree that the kinds of society they establish when they get into

² See, in *ENCOUNTER*, Timothy Garton Ash, "Our Confused Political Vocabulary" (February 1985), and the various contributors to the symposium "Who's Left. What's Right?" (February and March, 1977), followed (in the April issue) by Donald G. MacRae, "Sinister Thoughts on Left & Right."

power have fundamental features of a striking nature in common—and are a good deal more like each other than either of them is like Liberal Democracy, which is supposed to separate them in the middle, halfway between them. Clearly there is something deeply defective about this notion of a Left-Right axis on which all political positions can be plotted. Yet still we go on using it, or trying to.

On every side one comes up against this fact that political reality does not correspond to the vocabulary we have for describing it. The world with which politics deals is not divided up in the way the terms we have for dealing with it divide it up. The entities and distinctions that exist in it do not correspond to those embedded in our language. This makes the realities of our situation not just difficult to discuss but even to see, and the problems not just difficult to formulate but even to apprehend. Our conceptual equipment has deteriorated to the point where its use makes the problems themselves worse, for someone who sees a situation in terms that do not meet the reality is likely to act in ways that do not meet the reality either.

For instance, in Britain during the recent Miners' Strike (1984-85) it was obvious not just from the rhetoric of the Miners' leader, Arthur Scargill, but (much more important) from the strategy he actually followed, that the terms in which he was looking at the reality with which he had to deal were set for him by an essentially Marxist framework. He saw a ruthless private Capitalist imported to play the role of quasi-Capitalist employer bent on destroying the industry for being publicly-owned, creating unemployment with heartless indifference, and breaking the power of the Miners' Union, all with the backing of a Conservative Government. And he saw his role as that of leading exploited members of the working class in militant extra-parliamentary activity which, given the fraternal solidarity of unions in other basic industries, would not only defeat the Capitalist employer but bring down the Capitalists' Government.

The trouble with all this was that, however much one might sympathise with the coal miners, it bore little relation to the genuine realities and possibilities of the situation. I was disconcertingly reminded of a televised discussion I had had a few years before with one of the most influential Marxist thinkers of recent decades, Herbert Marcuse, in which I had asked him what he regarded as the chief defects exhibited by his own followers, and he had replied:

“Well, I would mention—perhaps as a main defect—their unrealistic language and, in many cases, totally unrealistic strategy. This is by no means general to the New Left as a whole, but it is very definitely to be found among them. They refuse to recognise that we are not in a revolutionary situation in the advanced industrial countries—that we are not even in a pre-revolutionary situation—and that the strategy has to be adapted to the real situation. Secondly, among the New Left, the reluctance to re-examine and to develop Marxian categories, the tendency to make a fetish out of Marxist theory, to treat the Marxian concepts as reified, objective categories, instead of becoming finally conscious of the fact that these are historical and dialectical concepts which cannot simply be repeated,

which have to be re-examined in accordance with changes in society itself. . . .”

Nothing could be more germane to my central thesis than this clear-sighted stricture of Marcuse's on the misuse of language and of concepts by his own followers. Unfortunately for the rest of us, it is not a sin which is confined to the Far Left. Perhaps, being more ideology-minded than most of us, they are more prone to it than most; but in lesser if not greater degree the rest of us are subject to comparable temptations. On the right of the Conservative Party there are influential figures who show a like tendency to reify the categories of an economic theory of a bygone century. There are others in the same party who seem to be looking at the world through a pair of spectacles inherited from Mr Samuel Smiles, with his essentially Victorian philosophy of self-help, so unrelated, alas, to the worst of the conditions in our inner cities today.

Among “permissive liberals” of a kind seemingly to be found in large numbers among social workers, there is a striking tendency to project the categories of an essentially wishful-thinking libertarianism on to their expectations of peoples' behaviour, especially that of the unfortunate and the criminal. Social Democrats, while trumpeting themselves as the new party for today and tomorrow, seem to do a good deal of their actual thinking in terms of the comfortable old framework of the Labour Party as it was under Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan a quarter-of-a-century ago. And, talking of the Labour Party, it is not long since I heard certain Labour Councillors denouncing all house-owner-occupiers as “Capitalists”, and describing humble East London council-house tenants who wished to buy the houses they lived in as “would-be Capitalists.”

I believe there would now be widespread agreement for the proposition that the British invasion of Suez in 1956 was a mistake which was brought about to an important degree by our seeing ourselves in outmoded categories, in this case categories of Empire. Our imperial role, our naval and military strength, our ability to pursue an independent foreign policy, our traditional domination of the Middle East in alliance with France, our prestige in the area, the Backwardness of the Natives—all these only-too-real realities of an earlier time had lost enough of their substance by 1956 to have become delusions, so that our attempts to behave as if they were still reality involved us in humiliating fiasco.

Tragic Transitions

I HAVE UNDERLINED the narrowness of the historical period in which most of our key political terms came into existence. The late 18th and early 19th centuries were the period of Industrial Revolution, and therefore the period in which what we still think of as modern society had its beginnings. The emergence of large-scale industry changed the whole social landscape. It not only transformed our physical environment by widespread enclosure of common lands and depopulation of the countryside, creating industrial cities and railways, introducing machinery into undreamt-of-areas of human life. It also transformed our politics. It

created new forms of power, and new classes with new occupations and new interests, which people sought to pursue through new forms of organisation—not only political parties but trade unions, cooperatives, etc. These changes, in turn, brought about constitutional change. It was a new world, bringing into existence new attitudes to society, new ways of thinking that found expression in a new vocabulary. It is the political vocabulary that was forged in those years, and in those circumstances, that we have lived with ever since.

But we are now having to learn to start referring to that era as “the First Industrial Revolution” in order to distinguish it from “the Second Industrial Revolution” and the post-Industrial society in which we find ourselves living (rather in

the same way as after the Second World War we had to change our name for the First World War). The old smoke-stack industries on which the First Industrial Revolution was based were followed in the middle and late 19th century by the large-scale development of electrical and chemical engineering, and these in the early 20th century by modern techniques of mass-production. But now in our own time we are seeing a wholly new kind of manufacture, based on electronics and automation, which is widely expected (and rightly, I think) to change the world at least as much as any of those earlier forms of industrialisation did. The old heavy industries are now, for the most part, irrecoverably involved in a process of long-term decline: coal-mining, steel-

Political Hygiene, or “An Outgrown Dilemma”



THE ANTINOMIES “Socialism and Capitalism”, “Left and Right”, are rapidly becoming meaningless, and so long as Europe remains bogged down in these false alternatives which obstruct clear thinking, it cannot hope to find a constructive solution for its problems.

Europe has developed a political climate in which words are no longer taken seriously. The ideological chaos created a semantic in-

flation and a semantic black market where words are traded at a meaning-value entirely different from their official quotation: where war is prepared by peace petitions, police states are labelled popular democracies, and “Leftism” means benevolent neutrality towards despotism.

At first sight the alternative “Capitalism or Socialism” appears much more concrete and meaningful than “Right or Left.” But on closer inspection it will be found that the term “Socialism” has suffered a semantic decay similar to that of the “Left.” German National Socialism, Russian Soviet Socialism; French Socialism which is Marxist with a pinch of salt, British Socialism which is Christian, non-Marxist, Fabianist, and heaven knows what, all derive their emotional dynamism from the fetish-power of the same word, attached to quite different meanings.

However, let us leave semantics aside, though it is an essential branch of political hygiene.

IT IS NOT a novelty in history that a real dilemma which once seemed all-important is gradually drained of its meaning and becomes a pseudo-dilemma as new historical realities emerge. People lost interest in waging wars of religion when national consciousness began to dawn on them. The conflict between Republicans and Monarchists went out of fashion when economic problems became all-important. The examples could be multiplied. Every period seems to have its specific conflict which polarises the world and serves as an ideological compass in the chaos—until history passes over it with a shrug; and afterwards people wonder what they were so excited about.

It is a further fact that some of these great ideological conflicts are never decided; they end in a stalemate. In successive centuries it looked as if the whole world would either become Islamic or Christian, either Catholic or Protestant, either republican or monarchist, either capitalist

or socialist. But instead of a decision there came a deadlock and a process which one might call the withering away of the dilemma. The withering, or draining of meaning, always seems to be the result of some mutation in human consciousness accompanied by a shift of emphasis to an entirely different set of values—from religious consciousness to national consciousness to economic consciousness and so on.

THIS “AND SO ON” poses a problem which we are unable to answer with certainty. We cannot foretell the nature of the next mutation in the consciousness of the masses, nor the values which will emerge on the next higher level. But we may assume on the strength of past analogies that the battle-cries of economic man will appear to his successor just as sterile and pointless as the Wars of the Roses appear to us.

Though we cannot foresee the values and spiritual climate of post-economic man, certain conjectures are permissible. While the majority of Europeans are still hypnotised by the anachronistic battle-cries of Left and Right, Capitalism and Socialism, history has moved on to a new alternative, a new conflict which cuts across the old lines of division. The real content of this conflict can be summed up in one phrase: total tyranny against relative freedom.

SOMETIMES I have a feeling in my bones that the terrible pressure which this conflict exerts on all humanity might perhaps represent a challenge, a biological stimulus as it were, which will release the new mutation of human consciousness; and that its content might be a new spiritual awareness, born of anguish and suffering, of the full meaning of freedom. And I don't mean by that, freedom from want, freedom from fear and the rest. Since the dawn of civilisation people have fought under the slogan of freedom; but it was always freedom from some particularly irksome oppression, freedom in a restricted, negative sense. I mean freedom in a much deeper and fuller sense than any we can conceive today, or see realised anywhere in organic nature. If that is the case, then we are indeed living in an interesting time, and the answer which we shall give to destiny's challenge is not without import for the future of our species.

Arthur Koestler

“An Outgrown Dilemma” (1950)
in THE TRAIL OF THE DINOSAUR (1955)

making, ship-building, the railways, and so on. The process, being a long one, may have ups as well as downs, but there is no escaping the long-term downward trend.

In human terms many of the problems created by this are tragic. There is, first and foremost, large-scale unemployment. Then, on top of that, whole communities are dying. In these circumstances many trade unions have long ceased to be organisations for defending workers against the exploitation of private employers—which is what they came into existence to be—and have become organised attempts to halt the decline of their industries, or to cushion their members against its bruising consequences. The employers are now as likely as not to be public bodies appointed by a democratically-elected government. When the unions demand more money from these they are demanding it not from the pockets of private capitalists but from the purses of general taxpayers; and when unions strike, it is sometimes to direct pressure in the first instance not at the bosses but at the general public. All these things are true, additionally, of large numbers of workers in the social services and in local government. Clearly, the nature of trade unionism has changed in fundamental ways. Yet the traditional vocabulary and rhetoric of trade unionism continue in full employment, despite the fact that they are increasingly (and increasingly painfully) at odds with reality; and despite the fact that they increasingly mislead their own users.

TRADE UNIONS are merely one instance of social institutions created by the First Industrial Revolution which are in process of being radically altered by the Second. With the decline of the large-scale manufacturing industries on which the First Industrial Revolution was based has gone almost naturally the decline of many of the great industrial cities which it and they brought into existence, and for which there is now no longer a need (or, at least, no longer the same need).

Some of these cities are dying at the heart—"the decay of the inner cities" has become almost a pat phrase, so familiar, for nearly three decades now, have been the problems which we group together under it. Many of these problems are, again, in human terms tragic: problems of slum housing, of decaying social services, of inner-city violence and crime. One thing which all of them have in common is that they are all—to an important degree—brought about by the decay of the forms of society which were brought into being by the First Industrial Revolution. My personal view is that they can be properly understood only as problems of transition, and that any attempt to deal with them by halting the processes of change which they exemplify, and thus trying to preserve the past, is bound not only to fail but to make matters worse.

But that is a digression. The point I am concerned to make is that we are living through the breakdown of the very form of society in which our most familiar political concepts and categories were formed, and to the realities of which their significance had formerly been related. That is why, inevitably, they are ceasing to be serviceable, and why there can be no prospect of their recovering their serviceability in the future. I will go further and say that I suspect it is not possible

to form a clear perception and understanding of the radical transformation of any society in terms of the concepts and categories that came to birth within that society during its period of formation. Our almost inescapable tendency to see problems and formulate solutions in such terms builds a backward-looking element into our formulations, in that the very terms themselves hark us back to earlier historical situations to which they had more application, and in which they made more sense.

THE DETERIORATION of the conceptual tools which the society created by the First Industrial Revolution provided us for our political work has already gone so far that even if no further changes were to be expected we should confront a problem of the first magnitude. But change continues at a pace which is itself accelerating. To speculate more than a little about the future is foolish and dangerous, but some of the broader outlines of the form of society into which we are moving can already be described.

Old Words, New Forces

BEFORE THE First Industrial Revolution at least 60% of Britain's workforce was employed on the land. This figure halved in a few decades, and continued to fall over a long period, until today the land employs less than 2% of the workforce. Yet this 2% produces immeasurably more than the 50% ever did, supplying a population several times the size with more than half of its food at incomparably higher standards of living. It is clear that what we are now witnessing is a repetition of this pattern, but with regard to manufacturing industry this time, not agriculture. In other words, the structure of employment of Industrial Britain is now being subjected to the same pattern of change as it itself imposed on pre-Industrial Britain.

By the 1830s Britain was "the workshop of the world", and for generations after that the greater part of our workforce was engaged in manufacturing industry. But for some decades now that proportion has been falling. Today it is under 30%, and going down fast. It will almost certainly be less than 10% by the end of the century. By that time, too, nearly all assembly-line labour will have been replaced by automatic processes. But there can be no doubt that less-than-10% of our workforce will be producing more wealth than industry in this country produced before. Yet manufacturing units are likely to be small by the standards of the past, perhaps never more than can be numbered in hundreds. And many of them will be locatable anywhere.

The great majority of our working people, it is clear, will be involved in services of every kind: selling, finance, construction, energy, transport, personal and domestic services, social work, health, education, the sciences, the arts, sport, leisure, etc. It is also clear that unless we achieve significantly higher levels of education in our population at large we shall continue to have severe employment problems in spite of the greatly increased wealth at our disposal.

It is misleading to say that "all this lies in the future." It

is what is going on now, and we are beginning to glimpse, indeed to experience, what it means in terms of social change: the transformation of our cities and our transport systems, of our relations to work and to leisure, and consequently to each other. To cite only one example: in most of the old heavy industries human muscle power played a central, indispensable role, and this, quite apart from all the other considerations involved, affected the relative position of men and women within those industries. The virtual disappearance of heavy muscle power from our economy has transformed the relationship of women to work, and hence to almost everything else about our society, including family life. Because of many basic and widespread changes such as this, all happening simultaneously, our society is changing so fast that links with the past are breaking. Attitudes to the past and to authority are becoming more and more irreverent; traditional authorities are losing their hold. Traditional class-membership commands less and less allegiance, and social mobility is the order of the day.

It sometimes seems as if everything about society that was most relevant to the formation of our political vocabulary is changing.

THERE ARE TWO possible reservations about my argument up to this point which I would like to consider.

First, someone might say that throughout the period from the beginnings of the First Industrial Revolution until now, our politics have been to a considerable extent class-based—that the emergence and decline of Parties has visibly paralleled the emergence and decline of Classes—and that class self-interest has played a more potent role in our politics than any amount of conceptual thought.

I would agree with this, but believe that the analysis I am offering accommodates it. People of all classes discourse about politics in the sort of terms I have been citing, and have been doing so for a long time. It is our common vocabulary. And the fact that the terms in which we think have an undeniable influence on the terms in which we see things means that they influence the terms in which we see our own interests, including our class interests. The very expressions “working class”, “middle class” and “upper class” date their acceptance into common usage to the 1820s and are themselves part of the political vocabulary I am discussing. Equally germane, the decline of the society thrown up by the First Industrial Revolution is having as one of its consequences the crumbling of the classes to which it gave rise.

It is indeed true that our major political parties have stronger roots in traditional class interests than in political thought, but this very fact means that when the traditional class demarcations start not merely to shift but to disintegrate it becomes difficult for the parties themselves to know whom or what they are supposed to represent. If they try to carry on as if their traditional class orientation remained unaltered they can only become increasingly detached from reality, and the basis of their support can only shrink. They have to change themselves or decline. To do them justice they (or at least a good many of the individuals who comprise them) are

fully aware of this, and are doing something about it. But effecting change in large and deeply entrenched institutions in a society such as ours is far from easy, however well-recognised the need.

The second possible reservation is that the analysis can be put too much in terms of the sorts of political perception that are articulated domestically through and by political parties in the West, when in fact there is at least one political force in the modern world, of an entirely different character, which is more powerful than any party, namely Nationalism. I would concede at once that if we turn our gaze outward from our domestic concerns to the international scene we see Nationalism as the most potent single source of political energy in the world. However, truths remarkably similar to those I have been propounding continue to apply in that context.

Political nationalism, as we understand it today, is a much more recent phenomenon than some people suppose: the very word itself has existed in the English language only since 1836, and is in fact yet another of our familiar political terms which date from the 1830s. Modern Nationalism’s greatest creative achievements came in the 19th century with the unification of Italy and Germany. More dubious were its accomplishments at the Treaty of Versailles in the redrawing of the map of Eastern Europe. Nearer our own day it has done more to fuel the “National Liberation” movements of the Third World than any other idea, including the ideas of Socialism and Marxism. But the consequences of “National Liberation” have been almost universally disappointing, not only to the people of the countries themselves but to sympathetic observers everywhere.

This is not to say that people in any of the former colonies would wish to go back to colonial rule. In general, human beings everywhere would rather have self-government than good government if forced to choose. But I know of no one who claims that there are many places in the Third World where “National Liberation” has resulted in good government.

As for current developments, one of the most conspicuous features of today’s international scene is the use of terrorist violence by small groups of assassins, bombers, kidnappers, hijackers, for whom very often the terrorisation or murder of the innocent is an essential part of their plan. And in the majority of cases, from the PLO to the IRA, these groups declare themselves to be nationalists acting in a Nationalist cause.

Altogether, I think that if one looks at Nationalism in a broad perspective of time it gives every appearance of being an ideal that has reached a state of decadence—though of course it is not the less formidable for that, quite the contrary. It is now part of the conventional wisdom of intelligent people in government all over the world that the most important problems of the modern world, such as “the avoidance of nuclear war” and “the elimination of Third-World poverty”—or, if you like, the effective counteracting of terrorism—cannot be solved at national level, that is to say at the level of decision-making by national governments. International, multinational, supranational forms of organisation are required, and are indeed being called into

being by the need. But what hinders their effectiveness more than any other factor is the strength of nationalist feeling among the constituent countries, their rooted unwillingness to let effective decision-making pass away from the level of national government. This is notoriously true of both the United Nations and the European Economic Community. For all these reasons Nationalism is also a category of political and social thought which continues to exert tremendous power over people's minds in a changed world in which, whatever its former relevance and achievements, it is becoming a dangerous anachronism. It is a category of thought whose hold on us we ought to make a conscious effort to weaken.

Room for Realism

WHAT IS to be done? We may agree on the desirability of new concepts and categories, and of new conceptual frameworks to embrace them, but somehow it seems almost impossible to imagine such things coming into existence all at once, or within only a few years from now. Yet, as I have already indicated, precisely this is what did happen in the case of our existing political vocabulary. And if it happened once, in response to the need for it, why should it not, in response to a similar need, happen again?

Some may be tempted to think that what we are waiting for, in suspension, is the next great political philosopher—the next Karl Marx, so to speak: someone who will respond to the advent of a new kind of society with a new political vision, provide us with a radically new analysis, new categories of thought, and new terms for them. I am not *unsympathetic* to this view. Given that for several hundred years now each successive century has produced one or two, or more, political philosophers of genius in Europe alone, it seems to me unlikely in the extreme that the provenance of such people should suddenly, now, unaccountably dry up. Most great political philosophers of the past were individuals who found themselves living in societies which were passing, as ours is, through sudden and disruptive change, and who were themselves involved on the margin of practical affairs. In other words, most great political philosophies seem to have been produced in direct response to a felt need created by events, not in academic or intellectual isolation. Given all this, it seems to me more likely than not that our generation, or the next one, will see such a person.

However, the crucial reservation I would wish to enter is that one person, whatever his merits, cannot provide a complete political vocabulary, except for the members of a sect. The greatest single contribution to our current political vocabulary to have been made by a nameable individual is, I take it, that contributed by Karl Marx. In addition to the coining of terms which many of us who are not Marxists make frequent use of, he has changed the way all of us see the role of economic factors in our society, and in its history. He has influenced the way all of us view class, and class interests, and conflicts between classes. I do not mean that many of us have

adopted the Marxist view of these matters—of course we have not—but we have virtually all felt the touch of its influence. And because of it we are more alert than we would have been without it to what has been called “the sociology of knowledge”, and also to what might be called “the sociology of culture.”

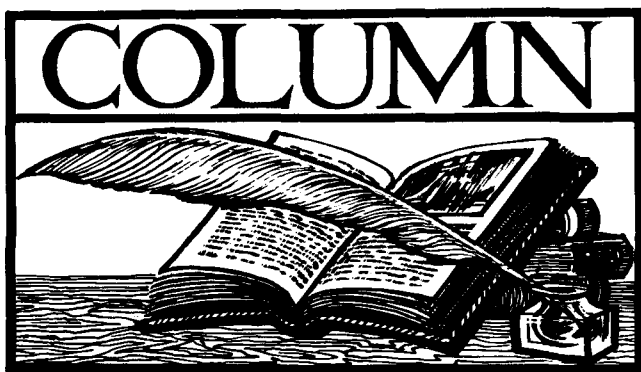
Yet the sum of all these and other important contributions forms only a small part of our political outlook as a whole. The Marxist vocabulary has never come anywhere near to displacing the ordinary non-sectarian vocabulary of most of our political discourse. Its inadequacy to do so is illustrated by the fact that the utterances of those individuals and groups who attempt to use it as a political vocabulary complete in itself have become one of the stock butts of political satire (and, in my view, justifiably so).

A far richer vocabulary than this is needed to cope even inadequately with the world. The live thinking of millions of people across successive generations cannot be confined within a framework constructed by a single mind, or by a single self-conscious political movement. That way lies sectarianism, which of its nature involves the shutting-out of not only large sections of the common vocabulary but with them the vast areas of reality to which they refer.

OUR CURRENT VOCABULARY is obviously not a self-conscious creation at all. Although most of the key terms originated in Western Europe within only a few years of each other they seem to have come into existence separately from each other. I doubt very much indeed whether any of the individuals or groups who minted the words had any notion that their particular bit of coinage would become part of a currency in which the verbal transactions of politics would be conducted for a century-and-a-half, eventually over most of the globe. It is probably true that the currency which replaces it will come into existence, and indeed will have to come into existence, in the same way—piecemeal, uncoordinated at first, and not recognisable as a general phenomenon until some time after the event.

If that is the case, those of us who are neither political philosophers of genius nor successful coiners of new terms may not be able to make an original contribution to it. But nevertheless we can be aware of the need and the problem; and, if we are teachers or writers or broadcasters, can help to arouse that awareness in others. The increasing generality or ambiguity of the decaying terms in our present political vocabulary render them ever more exploitable rhetorically and emotionally; but we can make ourselves perceptive about this, and with an effort resist it, and encourage healthy scepticism in others. For our own part, we can insist on using a realistic vocabulary, taking care to say what we mean, and avoiding splurge-words like “Capitalist” and “Socialist”, except in circumstances where it really is genuinely clear what they mean, or only after we have taken the trouble to provide qualifications that achieve that clarity.

This sort of undertaking on our part, though modest, seems to me both practical and of genuine value.



I USED to think that a Polaroid camera was one designed for Arctic temperatures. A polarised debate is quite the opposite; but it's what we get whenever anyone's rash enough to suggest censoring TV. When Winston Churchill *petit-fils* produced his draft Bill on the subject, the knee-jerk reactions looked like a goose-step. The liberal establishment was up in arms.

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm libertarian too. I distrust censors on principle—partly because they're arrogant, partly because they're muddled.

They're arrogant, surely, in two ways. First, in supposing that they know what's fit for the rest of us; secondly in regarding themselves as immune. A few will admit that they've been sickened or felt corrupted by forbidden material; some solve the problem neatly by proposing to ban what they haven't seen. But their common assumption, shared with medieval priests, is that they, the *cognoscenti*, can handle things that are far too hot for us, the common people. What nerves of steel. What noble rectitude. What nonsense.

Ah, the wowsers answer: it's all right for you. You have had a moral education; you're mature and civilised, beyond corruption, an honorary member of the priesthood. But think of the peasants: the deprived, the semi-literate, the nearly unbalanced, the disturbed adolescents, the potential murderers and rapists.

Well, these days it's hard not to—especially if you watch TV. And while I hope it's obvious that I'm no practising delinquent, I'm still not quite convinced that peasants are more corruptible than priests. Come up and look at my dreams some time. And if you retort that dreams aren't deeds, or that sanity implies resisting fantasies, there's still another argument to be faced. Granted that a minority may be vulnerable, must we regulate everyone else's life on the basis of worst-case hypotheses? If we did, we'd still be wearing armour; and we might ban florists to help hay-fever sufferers or cats to comfort asthmatics.

Some would-be censors' confusion seems as great as their *chutzpah*. What is it that worries them? Being revolted, or becoming depraved? The former is certainly unpleasant: but does it do permanent damage? And if depravity's the problem, what provokes it? The usual answer is a further muddle: sex and violence.

That phrase has always puzzled me. It sounds as natural as Simon & Schuster or bacon and eggs but its subjects have as

much in common as, say, food and crime. They're not wholly unconnected, but they certainly aren't identical; and I know which one I prefer.

In arguments about the Churchill Bill, then, I tend to side with the media people who condemn it. "Damn braces, bless relaxes", as William Blake said. Yet, even so, I find the debate too polarised. I don't like instant unanimity, and some libertarian polemic strikes me as dishonest. There remains a case to be answered, even if would-be censors don't get it right.

Let's start with a factual comparison. Like it or not, Britain has cinema censorship, based on age. Tall children flout it, and shorter ones object to it: but most adults regard it as desirable, if crude. No such rating system affects the theatre, presumably because few juveniles can afford the tickets; visits to live shows tend to be family outings under parental control. Contrast this with television. "PG" (Parental Guidance) films, "15" films, and "18" films can all be beamed into the home without restriction, save by a vigilant parent—who may not be there. Videos, including video "nasties", are often the attraction at young teenage parties. The hole in the censorship system is big enough to sink it. Do we let it go, or do we patch the leaking ship?

Some libertarians, many entrepreneurs, and a few despairing "realists" might well vote to scupper the system. Children, they might argue, are these days far tougher and more knowing than in past generations; and age-bans are simply advertisements for forbidden fruit. Mr Churchill and his supporters would extend the ban to TV and video, arguing that present anomalies make nonsense of the law.

Both sides make a virtue of consistency. It's illogical, they rightly point out, to apply different criteria to the large and the small screen. I'm inclined to agree: but I don't think the two cases are symmetrical. If we scrapped screen censorship altogether, we'd achieve consistency. If we tried to extend it to TV and videos, we'd almost certainly fail. In the first place, there'd be video pirates and pirate videos. In the second, whatever lumbering compromise was worked out to curb TV excesses, it would never be a complete match to age-censorship of films.

HOW, IN FACT, would it operate? If the law declared that no child under 18 or 15 must see a forbidden movie on the small screen, how would the ban be enforced? Would inspectors do a Gestapo act? Would delinquent parents be prosecuted? Would children be hauled before juvenile courts? The questions answer themselves. Or would the time in the evening correspond to the statutory ages? If so, how would the law enforce bed-times? And how would it prevent forbidden material's being taped?

Faced with these dilemmas, would-be television censors are forced back on blanket edicts, to keep off the small screen a whole host of matters thought unsuitable for anyone under 15. This idea has attracted ridicule—often, laughably enough, from people whose life is spent screening game shows and soap operas intolerable to anyone of a mental age higher than 10. I don't myself find the idea attractive, since its overkill would destroy so much of adult interest. What's more, it would

create new inconsistencies. At a stroke, British cinemas and theatres would be freer than TV. Are the would-be television censors secretly planning to rescue Wardour Street and the West End?

In practice, therefore, I suspect that we'll continue to rub along with the existing anomalies: age-censorship for cinemas, frequently breached; time-censorship for television, virtually unenforceable, perhaps adopting that French invention, *le carré blanc* in the corner of the screen to indicate strong meat.

But I won't pretend I find the outcome satisfactory. Sex on television is the least of my concerns: but it does concern me. It's an explosive subject, with all sorts of strings and price-tags attached; and adolescents need to see it as more than the next parcel of goodies they'll be allowed to unwrap. Not all small-screen titillation helps them understand it—especially luridly-lit pop singers doing pelvic thrusts.

Violence (to pursue the cliché sequence) is more often sickening than seductive: but that too can cause harm. Inured to small-screen mayhem, we risk misapprehending what real physical damage a crack on the skull can do. We become hardened—but by fiction, not reality. We get it wrong. And although some wallowers in fake gore argue that it's better to see how messy and disgusting murder can be, I still mistrust vicarious, armchair carnage, as I mistrust sex-in-the-head.

THE POINT I'm coming round to is that the real worries aroused by television are only partly centred on the usual subjects of our polarised debates. What bothers me most are two more general and pervasive features of the small screen: its "advertising effect" and its "acting effect"—neither of which has much to do with advertisements or actors as such.

The advertising effect is something that media people too often brush aside. Their opponents, the would-be censors, quite reasonably point out that vast sums are spent to sell often humdrum products—apéritifs, vehicles, washing-machines—by associating them with "glamorous" pursuits or settings: water-skiing, palm trees, smooth desert sand. Alongside the formal commercials, television goes on pumping out advertisements-in-all-but-name: for clothes (in *Dynasty* and *Dallas*), for cars (in almost everything), for helicopters (in the classier serials), for swift, conclusive, physical solutions to complex social problems (in the crime series)—and for astonishing discourtesy nearly all the time. People on television are far nastier to each other than anyone ought to be in real life. Snide police superintendents, sneering school yobbos, bitchy vixens, surly subordinates, untrustworthy colleagues, drunks, slobs, junkies, harlots, bad-tempered loud-mouthed bullies: it's amazing what people we invite in. And the libertarians claim that it doesn't affect behaviour. So why do real advertisements work?

¹ *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. By NEIL POSTMAN. Heinemann, £9.95.

² *Uninvited Guests*. By LAURIE TAYLOR and BOB MULLAN. Chatto & Windus, £9.95.

The acting effect is an offshoot of the advertising effect—mutual exhibitionism "as seen on TV." For all that real actors do their best to imitate ordinary people, ordinary people are getting harder to find. I've yet to hear a non-actor use Phoney Hesitation or Politician's Stammer ("I—yer" or "A-a-and"); but I continually see body-language copied from small-screen personalities, and hear near-jokes lacking only canned laughter to complete the illusion of "being on TV." More and more, not only experience but behaviour seems to be mediated through television. That I find far more sinister than the specific grievances usually discussed.

A NEW BOOK by Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, makes the same point with McLuhanesque fervour which doesn't always convince.¹ Professor Postman teaches Communication Arts and Sciences at New York University, and his grotesque examples are American: but his cautionary tale is Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and his arguments are universal. Secular, superficial, hasty, passive, unlettered, and obsessed by appearances, television in Postman's view discredits mystery, judgment, reflection, activity, reading, and concern for ideas. It certainly takes up time that could be better spent.

But the polarised debate continues. To contradict Professor Postman, who should appear but radio's own Professor Laurie Taylor, who with Bob Mullan has produced a survey of viewers and their attitudes, *Uninvited Guests*.² This, as you may have expected from the insouciant Professor Taylor, takes a far more laid-back line on the whole dispute. Taylor & Mullan's interviewees emerge as "sceptical and far from passive", keen to distinguish between "real" and "unreal", "more interested in other people" and better informed as a result of television. So we can all relax, then? Are we all shrewder and less gullible than TV's critics have imagined? Or is it just the British who are so smart?

I don't personally think that the two Professors' findings are incompatible. Laurie Taylor and his team, you see, consulted their informants in representative discussion groups organised by "one of the leading qualitative research firms": so what they got was broadly speaking what articulate people were prepared to say in public, with "experts" on hand.

"Yeah, I'm a bit slow, see, an' I don't reely distinguish between the news and the thriller. . . ." It's hard to imagine confessions of that sort. It's also hard to imagine anyone's confessing to being influenced in ways they're unaware of. And what strikes one, reading *Uninvited Guests*, is what's also obvious from ordinary conversations: that the British—perhaps *because* their TV programmes are better than others—are deeply addicted to the medium, and attentive to its every trivial flicker, noticing for instance whether a newsreader's tie matches his shirt. There were names in this book I'd never heard of: but, clearly, a lot of mental energy is focused on their doings and, still more, on how they look.

So, in some respects, Taylor confirms Postman. "There are two ways", Postman writes,

"by which the spirit of a culture may be shriveled. In the first—the Orwellian—culture becomes a prison. In the

second—the Huxleyan—culture becomes a burlesque. . . .

In the Huxleyan prophecy, Big Brother does not watch us, by his choice. We watch him, by ours. There is no need for wardens or gates or Ministries of Truth. When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk."

Looking for remedies, Postman toys with the idea of banning political commercials or prefacing them with a health warning, endorsing the Farmington, Connecticut, Library Council's plan for a month-long "TV turnoff", and guying TV with British "satire." In the end, rather despairingly, he plumps for education in Scepticism by the schools.

He may be right; and the distaste felt by print-oriented commentators may be a sign of their conservatism. I remember how positively television enriched the last years of my father, keeping him in touch with the world and with younger people's concerns in a way that *his* father had missed. I note how analytically my own teenage children can discuss television programmes—when challenged.

Yet they do spend hours watching the magnetic box. It's even a background to homework—as the radio once was to mine. A generation of addicts—or sophisticates who can take it or leave it alone? I wish I knew. All I do know is that television is the subject of endless tussles, and that the only fruitful talks are those we avoid polarising, by keeping our Arctic cool.

M

A Bell In Autumn

A low bell with a fuzzy sound
Tolls across the Common, a cracked
Angelus, and in the October sky
Are cirrus angel shapes, turning smoky.
A heavy pear breaks from the top of the tree
To clatter down through the boughs to the earth.

Surprised by the sun, we ate lunch out of doors—
The neck of the wine bottle was hot in my hand.
We clean up the yard and bring indoors
The sensitive plants: we are cutting back,
The autumn broad beans go in, the old bines
Are stripped away, and together we gathered
The apples since their pips begin to rattle.

So, we are on the verge of the harsh days
Yet throwing our green lines across to the spring.
Last evening we talked of death:
In the morning softly lock our arms in love.
Recalling the long afternoon's encounter,
And all day catching catnaps, silently:
How silent the house, in the autumn sunshine!

With all this fecundity, I can bear it,
The turn into the future that chills my heart.
The angel shapes turn now from ashen
To a softening pale flame pink
Promising love and stability and beauty
Even as the snorting traffic harasses
The consciousness that tries to hope and listen
For the tolled bell's distant low asseverations.

David Holbrook

“The Word with a Sidelong Glance”

On Mikhail Bakhtin—By SIDNEY MONAS



MIKHAIL BAKHTIN lived a long time (1895-1975), and given the circumstances, that was no small trick. He was a survivor, of the kind that remains incorrigibly himself while offering no resistance to a repressive régime. Indeed, he had a disconcerting way of engaging, coopting, adapting, correcting and sending off in unexpected directions the very concepts with which the Soviet régime armed itself. Reviewing his book on Rabelais in 1969,

that redoubtable Renaissance scholar Frances Yates was convinced he was a Marxist. Perhaps he was. But most of the Marxists with whom he had talked, discussed, debated in the 1920s, both those who were his friends and admirers and those who looked on him with hostility as a “religious”, were dead by then. So were his friends of the Religious-Philosophical Society and the Free Philosophical Association (*Volfil*). Few from among either the Marxists or the devout, at least among those who remained in the Soviet Union, died “normally.”

In 1929, along with the purge of technical specialists that resulted in the “*prom-party*” trials, there was a round-up of Leningrad intellectuals who had been marked for their religious activities, especially for association with Metropolitan Joseph of Leningrad and his stifled protest against the “official” Orthodox Church under a patriarch installed by the Bolsheviks. Bakhtin was among them. Ironically, the first edition of his book on Dostoevsky—the only book of his to appear under his own name until 1963—was published shortly after his arrest, and was reviewed favourably by no less a figure than Lunacharsky. It may well have saved him from the Gulag and certain death, and sent him instead as bookkeeper and assistant manager to a collective farm in Kustanai in Central Asia. (Double-entry bookkeeping had been one of the skills Bakhtin had picked

up from his banker-father.) From there, he received an appointment to the reconditioned normal school at Saransk in the Mordovian Autonomous Republic, and after sweating out the worst purge year in the Russian provincial town of Savelovo, where for a time the poet Osip Mandelstam also “hid out”, he returned to a chair in World Literature at Saransk where he remained until the end of the 1950s. In 1963, a second, much revised and expanded edition of his Dostoevsky book appeared, followed soon after by the book on Rabelais which he had originally submitted as a doctoral thesis to Moscow University in 1940, and which, after a troubled history and stormy debate, had been rejected in 1946. It was almost immediately translated into French and soon afterward into English. An awkward, perhaps suitably obscure, distortingly over-literal English translation of the Dostoevsky book was published in 1973 by Ardis (USA). Seeming to fit in with the winds then blowing from Paris, Bakhtin became a minor hero of literary theory and “lit-crit.” Known only in fragments, and even in these a figure of considerable controversy, he nevertheless acquired a formidable reputation among Dostoevsky scholars who began to use his word “polyphony”, and among Rabelais scholars pleased or displeased with his conception of “carnival” and “the carnivalesque.” Ironically again, for about fifteen years before his death, he became in Russia, and has become even more so since, a cult figure for his religious “saintliness” and has tended to be associated with the religious-nationalist tradition so vigorously in revival since the Khrushchev era.

NOW, LITTLE BY LITTLE, a better integrated and far more imposing and important figure is beginning to emerge. Not that a peerdom among Dostoevsky scholars or the prize among Rabelaisians could be considered insignificant achievements. But it has become increasingly apparent that these two studies, important as they are in their own right, were merely magnificent exemplars, cases in point, of an overarching philosophical anthropology, a philosophy of language as impressive and far-reaching in its implications as that of Wittgenstein. The recent Clark-Holquist intellectual biography outlines for the first time the full range of Bakhtin’s thought, places it against what little is known of his

life, and, most important, indicates the relatedness of the different works, the fundamental integrity of Bakhtin's life-work. Holquist has also done more than any single person to make available in lucid, competent English, with authoritative annotations, the major corpus of Bakhtin's writing.¹ Along with Caryl Emerson's retranslation of the Dostoevsky book,² which fully captures the nuances of Bakhtin's style and is accompanied by an informative introduction and the necessary annotations; Ann Shukman's interesting edition of essays, some by Bakhtin though originally published under other names, some by his close friends and disciples;³ the translations by Titunik and Matejka of the two basic works attributed to Voloshinov but probably written by Bakhtin; Wehrle's translation of *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* and Bakhtin's critique of Russian Formalism published under the name of P. N. Medvedev⁴; all these now form a large and coherent body of work, from which only the biological writings published under the name of "Kanaev" are missing.

Apart, that is, from the works that have been lost. As early as 1919, Bakhtin was at work on a major philosophical work which Clark-Holquist translate as *The Architectonics of Answerability*. As far as we know, two long and difficult essays that were published in Russian in 1979 are all that survive of it. He had also completed a book-length manuscript on "Goethe and the *Erziehungsroman*", but this is said to have literally gone up in smoke, to have been used by Bakhtin (a chain-smoker) as cigarette-paper during the war years of acute shortage.

THE RUSSIAN WORD translated as "answerability" (*otvetsvennost'*) may be rendered also as "responsibility" or "responsiveness", and is a key term for Bakhtin. Life itself he sees as a capacity to respond to stimuli from the environment. "Answerability", however, emphasises the centrality of language for his world-view. While "even the human infant's first cry", Bakhtin insists, is already oriented to another, and the putative gaze of the "other" is indispensable to the emergent sense of self (so that looking in the mirror one inevitably sees oneself from the

point of view of the "other"), it is language that enhances and subtilises the process by which the human self is constituted.

"The word has the capacity to register all the transitory, delicate, momentary phases of social change . . . a curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to many people as the greatest lie. The inner dialectic quality of the word emerges most starkly in times of social crisis and revolutionary change."

The psyche he sees as shaped by language. Yet language, which is a social creation and is for the individual "always already there" like the world itself, shows itself remarkably responsive in turn to the distinctive pressures and shaping of individual use. While the psyche may be seen as "the extra-territoriality of society within the individual organism", and the peculiar impulses of that organism reach consciousness only through the already socially mediated vehicle of language, they in turn through choice of diction, syntax, emphasis and intonation shape that language in a uniquely individual way. The constitution of a human self is, therefore, dependent both on the existence of another and on the pre-existent medium of a shared or potentially shareable language.

"Any utterance—the finished, written utterance not excepted—makes response to something and is calculated to be responded to in turn. It is but one link in a continuous chain of speech performances. . . . A word's multi-accentuality makes it a living thing. Individuals do not receive a ready-made language. They enter into a stream of verbal communication. . . . Expression organizes experience, not the other way round. One must always bear in mind whose word it is, for whom it is meant, and the occasion on which it is spoken. I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view."

On the one hand, Bakhtin seems to be completely socialising the individual psyche through this emphasis on language, the utterance, the word, dialogue:

"Any true understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding is to utterance as one line of dialogue is to the next. Meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers. . . . Only the current of verbal intercourse endows a word with the light of meaning."

On the other, he places a unique emphasis on just those *individual* aspects of language the linguists overlook—tone, inflection, circumstance, including the entire set of "chronotopical" (historical-geographical) circumstances that mark off the individual in time and space. He refers fondly to a passage in Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer*, in which Dostoevsky describes with amusement how he once overheard six drunken Russian artisans carry on a whole complex conversation by means of one unprintable Russian word! In Caryl Emerson's apt phrase, Bakhtin does not so much reverse the social/individual dichotomy as dissolve it.

Bakhtin's concept of dialogue is set in what he calls "major time" (*bol'shoe vremia*) and it accommodates both eternity and evanescence:

"The context of dialogue knows neither first nor last words, nor does it know limits. It stretches into the

¹ *Mikhail Bakhtin*. By KATERINA CLARK and MICHAEL HOLQUIST. Harvard University Press, \$25.00, £19.95. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (University of Texas Press, 1981); *The Architectonics of Answerability* (University of Texas Press, forthcoming); *Speech Genres and other Late Essays* (University of Texas Press, forthcoming). See also Michael Holquist's introduction to the recently reprinted *Rabelais and His World*. By MIKHAIL BAKHTIN. Indiana University Press, \$29.50, £24.60; paper \$10.95, £9.15.

² *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. By MIKHAIL BAKHTIN. Edited and translated by CARYL EMERSON. Introduction by WAYNE C. BOOTH. Manchester University Press, £11.50.

³ *Bakhtin School Papers. Russian Poetics in Translation, Vol. 10*. Edited by ANN SHUKMAN. Holdan Books (15 North Parade Avenue, Oxford OX2 6LX), £5.50.

⁴ V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Seminar Press, New York, 1973); *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique* (Academic Press, New York, 1973); P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method In Literary Scholarship* (Johns Hopkins, 1978).

limitless past and into the limitless future. Even significances *that have past* [Bakhtin's italics], that is to say, that were engendered in the dialogue of ages gone by, can never be constant (fixed and final, once and for all); they will always undergo change (renewal) in the process of the further, future development of dialogue. At whatever point in the development of dialogue one looks, there exist huge unbounded masses of forgotten significances, but at certain moments in the subsequent development of dialogue, they will again be remembered, and will come alive in renewed form in a new context. Nothing is absolutely dead: every significance will—in Time—have its Day of Resurrection."

In the pursuit of meaning and understanding, nothing is fixed or immortal, but

"We always arrive, in the final analysis, at the human voice, which is to say, we come up against the human being."

IT IS PERHAPS A PECULIARITY of the whole tradition of Russian philosophy from Vladimir Soloviev until the petrification of historical materialism in the Stalinist period that it is terribly literary; that it tends to look at life through the screen of literature; and that it elaborates its examples and explanations through literary reference. Shestov, Berdiaev, Merezhkovsky, Rozanov, even Plekhanov and Lenin all fashioned and expressed their world views through explications of literary texts, among which on the whole Dostoevsky's played a preponderant role. In a way, Bakhtin belongs to this tradition, yet he also transcends it. More than they, he "reads" the texts for their own sake. In other words, he approaches them from a professional linguistic and literary-scholarly point of view: he is precisely interested in their *language*. Also, as he explains in the essay from the *Architectonics* called "Author and Hero", he sees authorship, the process by which an author creates his characters and subjects, as a paradigm of self-creation. His "literary" philosophy includes a philosophy of the literary process.

In his critique of the major modern schools of linguistic thought, Bakhtin divides them into what he calls "romantic individualists" and "abstract objectivists." It is the latter, with Saussure and his followers at its head, that he attacks most systematically. He accuses them—with their preference for the study of *langue* (language as an abstracted system of regularities and rules) over *parole* (the individual speech utterance), and of the synchronic over the diachronic—of studying language from the point of view of scholars studying dead languages. People attending their own language, he insists, naturally approach it quite differently. It is not the system of rules and regularities of which they are conscious, but precisely individual speech differences, idiosyncrasy, intonation, inflection, particular and peculiar *choice*. It is in *parole* that language truly lives, whereas *langue* tends to resemble a carapace of dead matter, a kind of protective shell that accumulates around the vital organs. He quotes with

some approval the "romantic individualist" Karl Vossler to the effect that "every fact of grammar was once a fact of style." On the other hand, he accuses that school, which includes also Benedetto Croce and the Russian Potebnia, of totally misconstruing "the individual" as an isolated entity of pure interiority. Engaging both schools, Bakhtin co-opts and adapts their lexicon of fruitful concepts, as he does also with Freud in his critique of Freudianism, and with the Russian Formalists. Not only was "dialogue" a key concept for Bakhtin, it was his supreme practice.

THE ESSENCE OF LANGUAGE for Bakhtin is that it always involves someone speaking to someone from within a situation—i.e. a speaker, an interlocutor and historical circumstances. The latter change perpetually and are never the same for any two speakers, each of whom speaks from his own distinctive place in time and space, his own "chronotope" (to use the Bakhtinian word). A keen sense of this chronotopical crossing and joining of perspectives through language Bakhtin calls "novelness", and while seeing the novel, and most especially the Dostoevskian novel, as the art form that best adapts itself to this "heteroglossia", this many-voicedness of the human historical world, he traces its emergence back to classical antiquity, to Menippean satire and the dialogues of Plato. He contrasts the open world of the novel and its prose, in which characters speak in distinctive voices and (at its apogee in Dostoevsky) each with a free subjectivity of his own, in which characters, objects, experiences come wrapped each in its own characteristic linguistic mode, yet with the possibility of interchange and communication, with the closed world of the epic and poetry in which linguistic modes are all assimilated to the mode of the speaker, and characters and events are locked in an inaccessible and absolute past, *in illo tempore*.

"In poetry the word forgets that its object has its own history of contradictory acts of verbal recognition, as well as that heteroglossia that is always present in such acts of recognition. . . . In prose, the object reveals first of all precisely the socially heteroglot multiplicity of its names . . . unfolds as social heteroglossia outside the object, surrounding it; the author finds a focal point for heteroglot voices among which his own voice must also sound, outside of which his artistic prose nuances cannot be perceived, and without which they 'do not sound'. . . . Every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates. . . . It involves an understanding that is 'responsive'. . . . Understanding comes to fruition only in the response."

Whereas, "In poetry, even discourse about doubts must be cast in a discourse that cannot be doubted." A poem has its style in the incorporation, the closing-off of the poet's distinctive language, but "The style of a novel is to be found in the combination of its styles. The prose-writer can make use of language without wholly giving himself up to it . . . speaking *through* language, ventriloquating." ("Of course",

Bakhtin adds, "even the poetic word is social, but poetic forms reflect lengthier social processes.")

His characterisation of the difference between novel and epic is very similar to that of Lukács, yet where Lukács is full of nostalgic awe for the "lost world" of the epic, Bakhtin, the poet of openness, leans to the novel.

Within his studies of the novel, he is particularly fond of pointing out the different modes of discourse, and especially the use by one character of the speech of another. There is thus not only direct and indirect discourse, but also what Bakhtin identifies as "quasi-indirect discourse", in which one character uses the expressions, inflections, intonations of another without direct or necessarily conscious reference to that other. He speaks of "the word with a loophole" and "the word with a sidelong glance." A character "voice" is virtually its own language, soaked in ideology and bearing a unique perspective, yet at the same time impregnated with the voices of others, marks of intersection and appropriation, linguistic queries and grappling-hooks. In Dostoevsky's novels and tales, Bakhtin insists, even the monologues are dialogic.

"The hero's every experience and every thought is internally dialogic, polemically coloured and filled with opposing forces, yet also open to inspiration from outside itself, accompanied by a constant sideward glance at the other person. . . . The important question about him is not 'Who is he?' but rather 'How does he pass judgment on his surrounding reality and himself?' The hero elucidates himself from all possible points of view. Dostoevsky has created a hero whose entire life is concentrated in the pure function of perceiving himself and his world."

Because Dostoevsky's characters, according to Bakhtin unlike Tolstoy's, enjoy this kind of subjective autonomy their voices have an authority equal to that of the author's, and this is what Bakhtin means by calling the novels "polyphonic"—"The final word about an individual can be given only in the form of a confessional self-utterance." Dostoevsky's supreme object, Bakhtin says, is "finding the human in the human."

BAKHTIN'S STYLE weighs heavily at times, burdened by the tradition of German scholarship from which he emerged and habituated as it is to neologisms and complex abstractions. Yet he has as well a keen eye for the concrete instance, and in addition to the art of implication a capacity for unabashed direct statement that brings him closer to the novelists he writes about than to the deconstructionists or Lacanians, many of whose themes he shares. While some of his French admirers have complained of his lack of system and others elsewhere of his imprecision, he thought no system worth the risk of closure (for him, death) and profundity always a greater aim than precision.

In much of his writing, "the word with a sidelong glance" plays an elusive game with the always threatening censor. Writing about Rabelais at a time (the 1930s) when new and rigid hierarchies were being set up in his own country, he celebrates 16th-century France and the carnival spirit with its

assault on established ranks and its attacks of laughter on the agelasts aspiring to immortalise the values of their temporal rank.

"No dogma, no authoritarianism, no narrow-minded seriousness can coexist with Rabelaisian images; these images are opposed to all that is finished and polished, to all pomposity, to every ready-made solution in the sphere of thought and world outlook."

Bakhtin affirms what he calls the "joyous relativity" of the carnival spirit:

"As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed. . . . Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people . . . it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its joyous relativity. . . . This laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time, mocking, deriding. . . . It buries and revives."

It is never merely negative, or nihilistic, and the most central carnival image is "pregnant death", or death and rebirth. The generative spirit of carnival can be seen in "abusive words used affectionately, among friends, sparks of the carnival bonfire which renews the world."

Against the new prudery, he reaffirms the "lower bodily stratum" and its immortal mediation between man and earth. "The lower stratum", writes Bakhtin, "is always laughing." He sees Rabelais as celebrating

"those parts of the body that are open to the outside world . . . through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world . . . the ever-unfinished, unfinalisable, ever-creating body, the link in the chain of genetic development, or better two links shown at the point where they enter each other . . . most often depicted in proximity to birth and death . . . blended with the world, not separated from it, a field that has been sown and where new shoots begin to sprout."

Although this spirit of carnival should not be confused with its fragmented modern survivals, which have been both diminished and "privatised", something of its nature survives even in oaths and terms of abuse, whose irrepressible linguistic vitality somewhat overcomes their prevailing cynicism, and in them "a vague memory of past carnival still slumbers." Bakhtin contrasts the "grotesque body" of carnival with the "classical"—i.e. completed, sealed-off, perfected, perfectly symmetrical—body. (One is reminded of how Joyce's Leopold Bloom, incorrigibly curious, sneaked off to the museum to see if the classical statues had arseholes!) "The grotesque in art", he writes, "is like the paradox in logic . . . it liberates from the prevailing view of the world." Unlike the Romantic grotesque in which the world becomes alien

and something frightening is revealed—the *id* in a terrifying form—in true carnival grotesque, “the *id* is turned into a funny monster”, and “madness is a gay parody of official reason.”

THERE IS AN IMPLICIT PARALLELISM drawn between Rabelais’ France and the Soviet Union of the 1920s, when a world had indeed been turned upside down, social, geographical and cultural borders had overflowed, languages mixed and mingled, and “the people” celebrated a “feast for all the world.” Yet on the horizon, in the Soviet 1920s as in 16th-century France, the shade of oncoming night flecked the horizon: absolute monarchy and rigidification of the class structure in 17th-century France . . . the Stalinist prison-house of peoples in the Soviet Union. The introduction Bakhtin wrote for the Jubilee Edition of Tolstoy’s *Resurrection* compares that quite religious novel of Tolstoy’s later period explicitly with the modes of “Socialist Realism”, and the ironies of that comparison form themselves into a distinct second layer of meaning. Writing of Dostoevsky’s polyphony, he allows the felt presence of the rigid and liturgical homophony of “Socialist Realism” to rise from between the floorboards.

The religious-metaphysical basis of Bakhtin’s thought is clarified by Clark-Holquist. If at times he used Marxist language and sounded like a materialist, they remind us that he belonged to a religious tradition that spoke of the “holiness of matter.” I could not help thinking of Bakhtin when, not long ago, I looked at a modern Russian translation of the Gospel of St John. The opening, translated in turn into English, would read: “*In the beginning, the Word was already there.*” Bakhtin makes no attempt to account for the origins of language. But his explication of the mingling and individuation of languages bears a striking resemblance to George Steiner’s account of the multiplicity of tongues in *After Babel*. While Bakhtin avoids transcendent explanations with regard to language, carnival, and the chronotope, it is the metaphysical shadow that falls on all three major conceptions that gives them their peculiar and impressive depth. If Bakhtin had chosen an epigraph for his life work, it would not have been Tolstoy’s “The Kingdom of God is Within You”, but rather his own distinctive variant, with its emphasis on language and the social, “The Kingdom of God is Between You.”

MANY OF THE DETAILS of Bakhtin’s life have been irretrievably lost. Clark and Holquist tell us about his marriage, and even include a photograph of Mme Bakhtin, and some account of her devotion and eccentricity in old age, but nothing of her character when Bakhtin first met her. We have an account of his long bout with osteomyelitis, and the amputation of his right leg. (This great celebrator of the body and bodily processes was, all his life, a sick man, physically very circumscribed.) There is an excellent account of the Bakhtin Circle and the astonishing range of its interests and views. (One would like to know more, especially about Pavel

Florensky and Konstantin Vaginov.) Bakhtin’s debt to neo-Kantianism and, especially, to Herman Cohen and the “Marburg School” is dealt with in some detail, though his relationship to Husserl and Heidegger is merely hinted at. One of the few errors concerns the relationship of Bakhtin to the linguist N. Ia. Marr, who was at first elevated by Stalin to a virtual dictatorship over Soviet linguistics, then denounced by him in the well-known essay of 1950. Whatever Marr’s mistakes, and however he may have abused his extraordinary position, he was nevertheless a brilliant linguist; and he had a powerful impact not only on the poet Osip Mandelstam, but also on Bakhtin’s friend Voloshinov, who makes that influence quite explicit in his essay on “Literary Stylistics” included in *Bakhtin School Papers*. It is extremely unlikely that Bakhtin agreed with Stalin about Marr as Clark-Holquist claim on p. 328. (They would also seem to have got the Marxist relationship between “base” and “superstructure” wrong.)

One of the more interesting sidelights of their biography is the account of Bakhtin’s older brother Nicholas (who transliterated his name *Bachtin*). He was an expatriate who made his way from Russia via Constantinople and the French Foreign Legion to France and then to England. At Cambridge, he was close to Wittgenstein and seems to have had some influence in the turn from the positivism of the *Tractatus* to the broader speculative bent of the *Investigations*. Nicholas and his brother, though very close in their thinking (“Corsican twins”, Clark-Holquist call them) were completely out of touch with each other after the latter left Russia. As a don at Birmingham, Nicholas Bachtin acquired a certain local reputation; yet his ideas remained scattered in his notebooks, and no work worthy of his promise ever emerged.

Bakhtin outlived his brother Nicholas by a quarter-of-a century. Censorship and oppression, for all their formidable nature, would not seem in the long run to have done him much evident harm.

I WOULD LIKE TO END with two last quotations from Bakhtin. One is from his essay on the chronotope in *The Dialogic Imagination*, but might serve as well as part of his critique of Formalism:

“However forcefully the real and the represented world resist fusion, however immutable the presence of that categorical boundary line between them, they are nevertheless indissolubly tied up with each other and find themselves in continual mutual interaction, uninterrupted exchange goes on between them, similar to the uninterrupted exchange of matter between living organisms and the environment that surrounds them. . . . We might even speak of a special *creative* chronotope inside which this exchange between the work and life occurs, and which constitutes the distinctive life of the work.”

My final passage is from the book on Rabelais, Bakhtin’s tribute to the creator of “the encyclopedia of a new world”, and remarkable in that it might serve as well to sum up not

only Bakhtin's life and work, but also that of a great writer whom Bakhtin never mentions, but with whom he has quite special affinities: James Joyce.

"He did not adopt any official point of view, nor did he agree with any proceeding or approve any current event. But at the same time he could very well grasp and appreciate the relative progressiveness of specific manifestations of his epoch, among them certain royal decrees that he welcomed in his novel. However, his appreciation never took on an official and unconditional

character. For the popular, marketplace images, saturated with ambivalent laughter, disclosed all the limitations of this progressiveness. From the people's point of view, as expressed in the novel, there were always wider perspectives, reaching far beyond the limited progress of the time. Rabelais' basic goal was to destroy the official picture of events. He strove to take a new look at them, to interpret them from the point of view of the laughing chorus of the marketplace. He summoned all the resources of popular imagery in order to break up the narrow seriousness dictated by the ruling classes. . . ."

Old Times

By the wooden table, lichen green,
in heat-heavy shade, we smile away long absence,
drink wine. "Like Italy . . .", and you recall
your honeymoon at Garda, fascisti marching,
tumbling geraniums, lake's unexpected chill.
Abstracted, you overfill your glass,
meniscus trembling: tears at eyelid's brink.

I remember how she scolded you for little,
was restless, critical, though you seemed
not to mind, or notice even. For you
she was the girl you had enticed
into this Cambridge garden, marvelling
how her impossibly fragile wrists
drew heartbreak, *cantabile*, from her cello.

We carry lunch outside through well-used rooms,
I following your careful plod round hazards
of rucked rugs. Her photograph more formal
since she died, she stares through dust haze
at tipsy piles of books, turmoil of print.
The whole house has become your library;
has she grown to find the clutter comforting?

We feast on meat, fresh bread, neglected lettuce
from your garden; flavours enhanced by friendship
—not by the absently swatted flies you peel
from mortadella. You say that soon
the time will come when you must burn papers
you'd not want anyone to read. Letters?
Diaries, perhaps, in which you answered back?

"The house seems oddly silent, even now."
But five years' dust has partly blanketed
the pain, furred memory's uncomfortable edge;
you have been making bookshelves since the Spring.
As I leave, smoke from your panatella
weaves wraiths in the warm dusk. You kiss me,
say, "I'm glad you play her cello still."

Carole Satyamurti

The Oak

Approaching the perimeter, the boy
Who dreams of "Down the Bright Stream", and the man
Who knows "Guernica." The boy who will ask
What oak apples are, and the man who won't
Explain that they are tumours. The boy who hopes
To spot a red squirrel. The man who says
They will all prove grey.

My childhood and I
May never have danced Hey Derry Down as
Our forefathers danced around the oak, but
We have learnt to read the signs that tell us
THESE WOODS ARE PRIVATE.

Thick arteries
Have thickened until they shiver behind
This ragged blanket. Young companies
Of hazel that wriggle their golden tassels
In a lithe floorshow fascinate and stir
The man.

The boy looks up at a jigsaw sky.

A Wicked Witch, The Thunderer, or a Phantom?
The words on the wire repeat their one sound.
These woods, These woods—like a stock dove begging—
These woods have danced a navy on their knees,
Are War Office Property and have been
Since the Ice Age, since the first battering-rams.
Five hundred varieties of riddle
And song: the woodpecker attack, plain cuckoo,
Or a brace of Cruise. These woods are private,
And since we can read, we shall not trespass.

But words have not yet heard of literacy.
Outlaws, half wild, they will flee with Rimbaud
To the forest, hide there, seem to have helped
Manoeuvre your woolly thoughts into a pen—
But then leap out at you, tear at your heart.
They'll not come to your knife, but screech and squeal
Like saw-mills to be fed.

Robin Hood's Larder.
The Royal Oak. The Parliament Oak.
The Oak of William the Conqueror, and
Harry's Oak. Oaks that were pulpits.
Oaks that were gibbets. Oaks that are jokes and
Resemble naked men. The oak that Hitler
Gave to a Public School. The haunted oaks.
The stranded oaks. The oak of the artist
Or poet. The commemorative oaks.
And oaks strapped round for forty feet of circumference
That simply sprang up wild from a roadside hedge.
The oak that was an acorn on an oak
That grew as Christ grew.

These words are public
And this side of the perimeter fence.
There have been songs to which no creature knows
The words and words which nothing—not the raven
On Odin's shoulder, not the writing-desk
Veneered like the chart of a distant sound—
Can solve.

Pieces indistinguishably blue.

Gathered where they dropped but cannot germinate,
Brought to the open, free of history,
Free of the long shadow, they may be saved
From extinction, which is in every cup.

George MacBeth

Feathers

Feathers the peafowl bring
As daily gifts
Flash out as if a sting
Brilliantly lifts
In the wind. They seem to sing
At all that shifts.

I lay them in a box
Warm, and some wet.
More and more come. The cocks
Crow, and the net
Of barley ears unshocks
And shakes. And yet

These arrowing things remain
Like clashing wheat.
I finger one. Its grain,
Its emerald heat,
Remind me of a stain
Left incomplete.

Stooping beside a lime
I lift a quill
Bequeathed to use for rhyme
By the fowl's will.
Dew-wet, the feathers mime
Eyes that tears fill.

NOTES & TOPICS

Those Were the Weeks that Were

Claud Cockburn's Noises Off—By DONALD CAMERON WATT



I HAVE already concerned myself in a previous article in ENCOUNTER with the mythology surrounding *The Week*. Readers (of the issue of May 1972) will remember the weekly hectographed newsletter with which the late Claud Cockburn, aka Frank Pitcairn, established between 1933 and 1943 a thoroughly undeserved yet world-wide reputation for purveying the “real inside story”, belying the world press, and “telling the truth” as it was rather than as our-lords-and-masters wished us to believe it to be. *The Week* did its share, probably more than its fair share, in that ro-coco ornamentation of the believed history of the 1930s, with the myths of conspiracy and collaboration between Right-wing democrats and Right-wing anti-democrats. The task was aided by the various pseudonymous writers for Victor Gollancz’s Left Book Club and the Beaverbrook-inspired Gollancz-published *Guilty Man* series of the early 1940s. Since the mid-1950s historians have been preoccupied (this writer included) with the task of demythologisation. The reappearance of the memoirs of his wife and helper, Patricia Cockburn,¹ with an introduction by the editor of London’s *Private Eye*, as a reminder of Cockburn’s comeback as part of the neo-nihilist attack on the Macmillan establishment in the early 1960s, provides a good reason to take another look both at *The Week* and at the school of its later demythologisers.

Let me begin by pointing out what *The Week* was not. It was not, usually, for example, particularly well-informed. An exception to this judgment must be the period of its revival after its suppression in 1941, when (as one ex-civil servant recalled from those days) anyone with specific inside knowledge could virtually name the source of each report it printed. The years 1942-43 were years within Whitehall of great internal opposition to the Churchill administration.

¹ *The Years of the Week*. By PATRICIA COCKBURN. With an introduction by RICHARD INGRAMS. Comedia. £6.95. See also her autobiographical memoir, *Figure of Eight*. Chatto & Windus. £10.95.

² I have this information from the late Kenneth Younger, who before embarking on the political career which led him to become Minister of State under Bevin and Morrison, worked in the late 1930s for MI5.

These critical views would have been judged too subversive of public morale to gain airing in the “quality press”, and too sophisticated and élitist to bear more than passing mention in the pages of Beaverbrook’s populist anti-Establishmentarian crusading press. *The Week* printed them all. Curiously, neither Claud Cockburn’s various memoirs nor Patricia Cockburn’s account of *The Years of the Week* do more than touch on this period in *The Week*’s activities. It is, one must presume, difficult to square with the image Claud Cockburn sedulously strove to propagate in the 1950s and ’60s of a journal that was anti-Fascist and populist when the powers-that-were were purblind and corrupt. *The Week* was, in fact, always élitist rather than populist, and agin government as a matter of principle. As such it deserves some respect for its undoubted qualities. But normally well-informed it was not. Mrs Cockburn in this shows a lot more astuteness than her late husband when she cites (p. 263) a friendly critic of *The Week*’s coverage of the events of 1939 as saying “*The Week* has achieved the remarkable feat of being 70 per cent right and 100 per cent wrong.”

Nor, must it be said, whatever happened in 1933, was *The Week* long an especial target for MI5 or an especial worry to those Establishment mandarins whom Hilaire Belloc (long before Claud Cockburn) epitomised as inhabiting what in Imperial China would have been entitled “The Ministry of Things that Should Not Be Known.” That status was reserved for another private newsletter, *The Whitehall Letter*, edited by the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Victor Gordon-Lennox; he was regularly supplied (by Sir Robert Vansittart and other Foreign Office opponents of the more acute forms of appeasement) with leaked information in breach of the Official Secrets Act.²

IF *THE WEEK* was inaccurate, ill-informed, heavily influenced from time to time by its editors’ political views and loyalties, and less important as a goad to authority than its editor believed—and if its version of events has been largely rejected by historians (save for those writing from the Soviet Union)—why should one waste any more time on it, save as a curiosity like “Pitdown Man” in a study of historical fakes and forgeries? Are not historians, having on the whole successfully demythologised the 1930s, correct to dismiss it? No, they are not, for they have evidently forgotten the significance of noise.

"Noise" in this sense is a term given by Intelligence to the mass of conflicting reports, rumours, allegations, accusations and plain downright untruths out of which the analyst is expected to pick those few accurate reports which foreshadow the kind of event the analyst is supposed to apprehend and forewarn his bosses against—the remilitarisation of the Rhineland; the decision to station missiles in Cuba; the erection of the Berlin Wall, or whatever. It is a phenomenon which contemporary historians have so far largely ignored. Their main endeavour has been to play the game of the analyst and screen it out, devising what are hoped to be ever more sophisticated ways of recognising it for what it is—"mere noise." Indeed historians are in danger of eliminating it entirely. Yet the role of such noise in the 1930s (if not in every period) is a fascinating one—especially if two kinds of questions are asked: who generated it? and why was it believed or listened to? For the noises which filled the 1930s were an essential part of the intellectual and social environment in which politics and political decisions existed and functioned. They were (and are) an essential part of the contemporary atmosphere; and Cockburn himself understood this.

"The special impact of the paper [writes Mrs Cockburn] was in part due to the fact that it was saying in public what a great many people were saying or thinking in private. . . . Claud took the view that there are many occasions when the existence of a particular rumour is as significant and worthy of mention as a proven fact. Regarding this as a vital principle of journalism, he was often attacked by people who supposed, or pretended to suppose, that he made no distinction between fact and rumour. This was nonsense. But he did believe that the speculations, and even the gossip of informed people ought to be reported too."

THE "NOISE FACTOR" in the 1930s is an essential factor to a proper understanding of how and why people acted as they did. Cockburn's pages—like those of the less inhibited or carefully edited American press, the memoirs of the foreign correspondents, the diaries of the political Creeveys and diplomatic Pepyses of the era—are an essential source, as valuable as many a diplomatic report or Cabinet memorandum. (Indeed there are a good many official reports in European and American public and private archives to which just as much or as little credibility should be applied as to those reports in *The Week*.) What Cockburn never understood, however, is that in seeing himself as a clinical diagnostician of the symptoms generated by the illness from which contemporary society suffered he was entirely wrong. He was not the physician; he was himself helping to spread the disease.

But to return to the "noise" factor: some of the reports *The Week* carried were given to Cockburn by members of the US foreign correspondents' corps who wanted a quotable source for information given to them in confidence, which they felt unable to report without "blowing" their informants. Some

were manufactured in Willi Muenzenberg's paper-mills in Paris, those same mills that produced the story of Goering's involvement in setting fire to the *Reichstag* or the stories of German and Italian inspiration for the Spanish army's abortive *pronunciamento* out of which came the Civil War in Spain. (*Intelligence Digest*, a kind of Far Right mirror-image of *The Week*, curiously seems to have drawn much of its anti-Soviet conspiratorial reports also from Paris, from the paper-mills of the White Russian emigration that was later to produce the *Litvinov Diaries* and the alleged memoirs of Stalin's nephew. . . .) But there were others, less obvious generators of noise than these.

Consider for example the following noisy stories which still surface from time to time in what might be called the neo-Bourbon schools of historiography (learning nothing, forgetting nothing). When Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland in March 1936 the German troops which marched into the Rhineland did so "with orders to withdraw again if any French military reaction was encountered." Thus it follows that British and French military action to cause Hitler's withdrawal would have probably prevented the outbreak of World War II! This story is quite contrary to the truth. The *Reichswehr* was under orders to treat any intrusion of French troops into German territory as an act of war.

Here is another from 1936. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, the French Popular Front government of Léon Blum "wanted to supply arms to the Republican government but desisted after British pressure had been applied to Blum on his visit to London." Instead he adopted the policy of non-intervention pressed upon him in London. . . . Untrue as stated. Blum preferred non-intervention in Spain because he feared the Civil War would spread to France.

More interesting (because less known) is the flood of contemporary reportage coming out of Berlin in the winter of 1936-37 about the "dominant" role played within Hitler's Germany by the German military leadership and the degree of "closeness" they had re-established with their opposite numbers in the Soviet High Command. Again, quite untrue. Relations were so bad that the *Reichskriegsministerium* sent a senior officer who had been involved in the pre-1933 German-Soviet cooperation to sound out the more friendly of his former acquaintances among the Bolshevik military hierarchy on what could be done to improve them. He found no one willing to talk with him. Four or five months later, the arrest, trial and execution of Marshals Tukhachevsky and Yegorov and the suicide of Marshal Gamarnik were announced.

In May 1938, reports suddenly filled the world's press of large-scale German moves towards the Czech frontier. The Czech government recalled reservists to the colours. An Anglo-French *démarche* was made in Berlin. Hitler was forced to announce that he had no plans to attack Czechoslovakia (a deficiency remedied within the next eight days). The world press hailed this as evidence that Hitler would "climb down" if only the powers stood up to him. This view was adhered to by Sir Robert Vansittart through thick-and-thin (and only abandoned with the utmost reluctance after the War by the historians such as the late Sir Lewis Namier who shared his views).

In September 1938, in the last days before Munich, the Soviet Union was said to be willing to come to the aid of the Czechs with aircraft and troops. They waited only on a decision by President Benes to invoke the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement of 1935. Indeed there were already Soviet air force planes on Czech airfields and Soviet air force personnel "milling around" in Prague waiting for Benes to give them the go-ahead. But the word never came. Benes preferred capitulation. This story is quoted by Mrs Cockburn, giving a Soviet political agent (Michael Koltzov, later purged) as the authority.

When the German armies were allowed to take over the Sudeten frontier districts with the Czech Maginot-Line-style fortifications which faced Germany, they were appalled by the strength of Czech fortifications. A German staff officer was widely reported as having said that had the German army realised how strong they were they would never have encouraged Hitler to attack Czechoslovakia. *Fact*: Hitler's own plans for an attack on Czechoslovakia drove the Chief-of-Army-Staff General Beck to resign and his successor General Halder to plan Hitler's arrest and deposition. The Czech fortifications were actually used as testing-grounds for German artillery attacks, as a result of which German military plans drawn up in 1938 were based on breaking through France's Maginot Line.

THESE ARE SIMPLY SOME EXAMPLES of stories which were widely reported and believed in the 1930s, every one of which has either been proven untrue or, at least, has found no support in the voluminous historical documentation now available for the 1930s. The question now open is: who spread them, and why were they believed?

Some of these tales can be easily traced to misunderstanding of the contemporary evidence (as with the Rhineland story), or to contemporary attempts to shift the diplomatic blame on to a convenient national scapegoat. The Léon Blum story has been traced to his own political entourage; the story of Russian troop preparations on the eve of Munich (strange that no one else spotted the Soviet air force personnel in Prague in September 1938) is clearly a Soviet effort to conceal the fact that Soviet troops were *not* prepared to intervene had Germany attacked Czechoslovakia—indeed given that the nearest Soviet troops were separated from the most Eastern point of Czech territory by Polish and Romanian territory, it is difficult to see what they could have done, even had the will to intervene existed.

The episodes of the May weekend crisis and the rumoured *Reichswehr*-Red Army *rapprochement* are odder. One of the sources which gave currency to both sets of reports was the private intelligence service organised for Sir Robert Vansittart by a former assistant British Air Attaché in Berlin, Colonel Christie. Not all of Christie's informants can be identified from the code-names which Christie used to hide their names in his private correspondence with Vansittart. But their usual reliability led Vansittart to remain convinced to his dying day that, for example, Hitler had in fact been planning a Prague *coup* in May 1938 which premature pub-

licity had forced him to call off. Odder still is that another source of these reports was the mysterious German *Abwehr* officer who was passed by the Czechs in 1939 over to British Intelligence and who continued (until his discovery by the Gestapo and subsequent execution in 1943) to be one of the most reliable sources of our intelligence out of Germany. In this case, however, his information was entirely false.

It is easy to assume that the rumours of the *Reichswehr*-Red Army *rapprochement* originated with the same Berlin sources that were allegedly concerned with planting on the *NKVD* (via Czech Intelligence) allegations of "a Red Army conspiracy to overthrow Stalin." Conventional wisdom has long identified these sources with the *SS* intelligence service then being built up by Heydrich and Schellenberg. It is hardly probable, however, that Heydrich's group were involved in feeding reports of a German coup against Czechoslovakia either to Vansittart in London or to Czech Intelligence. The possibility arises, therefore, that the source was not German but Soviet—and that what we have here is an early form of Soviet disinformation.

Even if this speculation is unjustified, and it is assumed that Colonel Christie's informants and those employed by Czech Intelligence were both in contact with German and Soviet purveyors of disinformation, one is left with a vision, less of daring spies circulating unrecognised among German military and political decision-makers, enjoying their confidence and reporting clearly and unambiguously what those confidences revealed, than of a shadowy milieu of information-peddlers and fences. It was an underworld known to and tolerated by professional intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies alike because they could be used both as sources of information and as middlemen through which information could be dispersed, if and when it suited those who controlled it to let it loose, to "leak." Some members of this milieu were, undoubtedly, journalists. Others were men on whom journalists as well as professional intelligence men relied for information, hot tips, exclusive stories, scoops and the like. It was all the espionage equivalent of *maisons tolérées*.

It was on to this world that the world inhabited by Claud Cockburn and *The Week* abutted. His American correspondents, who turned to him to provide a published source for reports whose origins they did not wish to disclose, were in a similar position—but, of course, their milieu abutted on to many others more open, more powerful, more distinguished and more *comme il faut*. But as one rereads the pages of *The Week* with their curious mixtures of inaccuracies, innuendos, *non sequiturs* and *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*s, of half-truths, rumours, and untruths, it is with this tolerated underworld of information peddlers and information planters, of burglars, forgers and fences, and confidence tricksters that one is in contact, and not with tangibly illicit stolen goods.

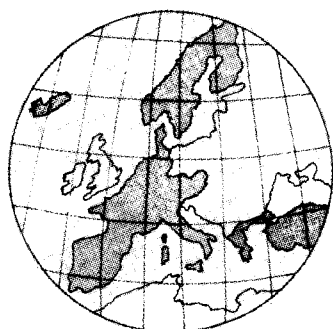
This is the forgotten and buried world of the 1930s which the historian must now resurrect and retrieve. For it was just as real—and unreal—just as subjective, yet just as much a part of the contemporary political environment as the perceptions and misperceptions of those in power and authority whose views can so easily be documented in the files

of the Public Record Office or in the papers of a Neville Chamberlain, a Maurice Hankey, or an Antony Eden.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Delusions of Grandeur, Realities of Power



WHEN President Mitterrand visited Syria in 1984, the French journalists who went with him were held up at the airport by the Syrian authorities, and subjected to a humiliating search, under the too complaisant eyes of French officials. A Milanese reporter remarked that the Syrians had

inflicted no such indignity on the journalists who had accompanied the Italian Foreign Minister some months earlier. One of the French officials replied rather haughtily: "But then Italy is a much less important country than France! . . ."

The argument seems laughable. Is a country's importance to be measured by the insults it swallows? Yet there is some truth in the thought: a country whose international role is modest seldom provokes aggressiveness. Unfortunately, the converse does not apply: not all the victims of aggression are great powers.

Normally, we attribute such mortifications to France's apparent decline, since World War II, into a *puissance secondaire*—like Europe's other former Great powers. Indeed, by comparison with the two superpowers, no European country is capable of more than modest action, if any, on a world scale. Yet this obsession with hierarchy, and the corresponding effort to be more than "a second-rate power", sometimes leads certain governments to ape behaviour which is beyond their means while neglecting their real resources.

In the first place, the notion of *grande puissance* is misleading. Great as some powers once were and others are, their supposed omnipotence is more an image for the beholder than a reality for themselves. The United States, for example, was unable to win the Viet Nam war or to safeguard the 1973 peace agreements, to protect Cambodia and Laos from Communism, or to prevent Soviet penetration in Africa. It neither foresaw nor forestalled the Khomeini revolution in Iran, and so was evicted from a country vital to its global strategy. The fall of the Shah led to the second "oil shock", from which the world economy has not yet recovered; it also facilitated the Soviet invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan.

To add insult to injury, in neither Iran nor Afghanistan has America been able to secure even a minimum of active support from her European allies. Finally, in Lebanon, the Shultz Plan has been no more successful than the Mitterrand Plan in opposing Syria's *de facto* annexation. These are only examples, but they are hardly examples of omnipotence.

The other superpower faces obstacles which are not so much political or military as economic. The skill with which the USSR moved in on Africa since 1975 has not prevented its presence from destroying the standard of living of its protégés. This is due partly to the intrinsic weakness of a totally state-Socialist economy, and partly to the Soviet Union's inability to aid its new satellites (notably with foodstuffs, which it chronically lacks). Even the prevailing disinformation about the Third World has not completely concealed the fact that ten years of Communist power in Ethiopia have produced the most murderous famine in the country's history, the direct responsibility of Moscow and of Colonel Mengistu. And this on the heels of a similar débâcle in Mozambique, which in order to eat has had to come to terms with South Africa. Soviet nuclear power does not mean global omnipotence.

Barely less illusory is the European nations' vision of their own lost pre-War status as "Great Powers." Britain and France were unable to enforce the Versailles Treaty forbidding the rearmament of post-Imperial Germany. They failed to help, or were too late in helping, their allies in central Europe. They stood by while the Axis powers intervened in Spain and Ethiopia. June 1940 finally revealed the true state of their military preparedness, and of their ignorance about Germany's. If these were "Great Powers"—France, after all, was economically backward—no thanks! In many respects, the European powers are "greater", and politically healthier, today than before 1939. Our obsession with America as a superpower ought not to prevent our seeing that fact.

If "Great Powers" are sometimes powerless, a number of others—so-called "small" or "medium" powers—often powerfully influence world events. For a quarter of a century, Cuba has played an international and strategic role—out of all proportion to its intrinsic capabilities—as an ideological mascot and a spearhead of the Soviet Union. Japan, Switzerland, and the Federal Republic of Germany, like Sweden before them, have realised that industrial, technological, and marketing ability are a surer basis for world power than an obsession with the "*grand jeu*" of diplomacy. The best way to tip the scales is to be heavy. Recrimination is no makeweight. Any country which others cannot do without, if only in a single respect, enjoys power.

Some countries do so because their situation is critical—geographically, strategically, politically, or psychologically. In Poland, Afghanistan, El Salvador, or Israel, all of which are symbols and mirrors of world tension, the smallest event has world repercussions. The Cambodians, by contrast, against whom the Vietnamese army made its final assault on Christmas Eve, and whose last survivors fled in tens of millions into Thailand, finally disappeared without provoking any outcry, or at least any reaction. For the West, their country had fallen irreversibly into the Communist sphere. It was no longer a disputed zone.

Pakistan, on the other hand, is precisely that. A glance at the map shows it as one of the West's last bastions in the area, flanked as it is by Afghanistan (occupied by the Red Army); Iran (unstable, unpredictable, violently hostile to the West); India (more and more Soviet-inclined); and the People's Republic of the Yemen (from which Moscow can organise subversion in Oman and Saudi Arabia). And what a region that is—the prime source of the industrialised countries' vital energy supplies. So Pakistan is in a position to exert maximum pressure on both East and West. It seems likely that its government, which is undeniably open to attack, will be attacked more and more—with the secret help of outsiders whose prime motive will not exactly be their love of democracy.

Turkey, likewise, has substantial negotiating assets, for it too dominates an area which is critical for everyone. All honour to *l'esprit pluraliste* of Nikolai Tikhonov, Prime Minister of the USSR, for having paid a warm-hearted and fruitful visit to the notorious Ankara government, which neither George Bush or Laurent Fabius could have undertaken without being loudly denounced in the West. In Moscow they take geopolitics seriously.

Power, then, is not something static, a status to be attained once and for all. The French dislike admitting this, because they founded their own society on settled shares and inalienable rights. They would like that society to be mirrored on the international scene. But the world is not like that: it is all relativity and constant change. From one angle or at one moment, a country may possess enormous power: from another, or at another time, its powers may be nil. The art of foreign affairs is to choose precisely one's angle and one's opportunity. Japan may be able to flood and dominate the world market for cars, television sets, computers, movie cameras, or pianos; but the Japanese Prime Minister would be taken to be demented if he sent half a platoon of infantry to the Gambia.

For Western Europe, power—i.e. the freedom to decide and act—depends on two things: intelligence and teamwork. The effort to act as a team, in all fields, *une convergence européenne*, is the price to be paid if Europe is to survive as an independent entity. It has become a cliché to point out that Western Europe would be the greatest power in the world if it were less divided, less chaotic, and less anarchic. Yet any policy which ignores this basic fact will sooner or later look as criminal as French and British blindness to the events of the 1930s.

As for intelligence, this should above all mean perceiving what is new in our situation, and not remaining prisoners of our past. Take the debate about so-called "Star Wars." This is a complex, long-term project, whose technical aspects and implications for Europe can be debated till the cows come home. Politically, however, the facts are very simple. It is because the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) would put the United States in the lead again that Moscow asked to resume negotiations on arms control. As always in these matters, the Soviets are also trying to stir up the Europeans

against the United States. So far they have succeeded very well: François Mitterrand has condemned SDI, and even Margaret Thatcher, while declaring herself in agreement with Reagan, has asked Washington to postpone "Star Wars" during the negotiations and only resume the research if the negotiations fail. Which is exactly what the Soviets want—because the negotiations will never ever really fail unequivocally. There will always be reasons for hoping that they may soon start up again—on condition, it will be argued, that SDI is once more postponed. In other words, we are on the point of falling into the same trap which led NATO to renounce the 'neutron bomb'—the only weapon which could have offset our Western inferiority in conventional armaments without provoking escalation.

One of the secrets of power is to avoid systematically weakening one's own alliance. Admittedly, this is so obvious that it must have been stated by every—even the dimmest—Marshal of France over the centuries. But truisms are preferable to idiocy every time.

Table Pleasures



SOME VERSES OF Virgil depict a peasant at dawn, by the corner of the fire which he has just re-kindled, grinding with pestle and mortar some garlic and olive oil whipped up with herbs. This is his breakfast—garlic mayonnaise in the strictest sense of the term. Theocritus wrote: "I will draw from the bowl pteleatic wine [from the island of Cos], stretched out by a fire where beans are cooking. . . ." Look at Boileau's Third Satire, nicknamed "The Ridiculous Meal"—historical evidence to be read not just as a comic sketch, but as an attack on tradition by a champion of *la nouvelle cuisine*, 13th-century style. The critic is complaining, in fact, against overcooking, too much butter in the sauces, and the abuse of acid verjuice, typical medieval seasoning.

To find real evidence of eating habits, one must go beyond gastronomic treatises, for cook-books are really ideological manifestos. This is well understood by Robert Courtine, who for years has been seeking out in the writings of Balzac, Zola, et al., descriptions of meals in all social classes, both in restaurants and at home.

In his *Vie Parisienne*, of which we now have the second volume,¹ his method is to cover Paris district by district, going back in time. He brings to life the cafés, restaurants, markets, and tradesmen of the past. Nor does he limit his survey to food and drink, looking in as he does on political, literary, and artistic bars, and places like the old Régence, for two centuries the temple where two worlds played chess.

His is a picturesque tour, but also an anthology of rare and valuable texts from newspapers now buried in inaccessible archives. But famous pens are no less fecund: Balzac's *Comédie humaine* has more than a score of descriptions of

¹ *Le ventre de Paris*. By ROBERT COURTINE. Librairie académique Perrin.

meals at the Rocher de Cancale in the Rue Montorgueil, or at Véry's: both fashionable haunts in the second half of the 19th century. Courtine shows us also the birth and epic development of the restaurant chain: how the famous and popular Bouillons Duval were created, soon imitated by the Bouillons Chartier—the providential refuge of cabmen and provincial students. The “*bouillon*” in question, a nourishing broth, could be had for a modest *prix fixe*, with boiled beef, as it were, thrown in.

We French are so unaware of our own social habits that travelling has always been the best way to show the relativity of our tastes and customs. Hence the excellent idea which Phillipe Gillet has had, of compiling and commenting on narratives by travellers in Europe from the 16th to the 18th century.² How sharply the French look at Germany and Poland; the English or the Germans at France; the Italians at Britain, Spain, or Turkey. At home, all is normal: abroad, everything is symptomatic. So much so that, on returning home, the traveller looks at his own country with an outsider's eyes.

It used to be thought that flavouring wine with herbs and spices ceased in the ancient world. Not at all. Montaigne, when in Germany, noted that sage was crushed in his glass. Thomas Platter, an English traveller who attended a “dinner” (*notre déjeuner*) given by Henri IV, tells us: “Every time the King wanted wine, it was poured for him into a crystal goblet containing pimpernels. . . .”

The taste and aroma sought and obtained from wine have changed completely since the 17th century, as wine-growing and wine-making have changed. This is clear from the excellent *Savoir boire* by Jean-Luc Pouteau and Nicolas de Rabaudy.³ Similarly, the French way of serving at table altered at the end of the 18th century. Previously, each guest faced several dishes of miscellaneous foodstuffs. As soon as he had taken a single mouthful from one of them, it was

whisked away—rather like the trays of snacks at a cocktail party today. That is why the menus of the time give such a false impression of extravagant gourmandise.

In some ages, too, the enjoyment of language seems to have replaced the enjoyment of food. Perhaps the finest flight of gastronomy is the literary pleasure of a brilliantly written menu, followed by the visual enjoyment of multicoloured delicacies, beautifully displayed, but more for the eye than for the palate. This was the complaint of Sister Juana Inès de La Cruz (1651-95):

*What you see, this tinted imposture,
Flaunting the externals of art
With false syllogisms of colour,
Is the sly deceiver of our senses.*

(A free translation of:

*Este que ves engaño colorido,
Que del arte ostendando los primores,
Con falsos silogismos de colores
Es cauteloso engaño del sentido.)*

After the travellers' tales come the guides for travellers, of which the 19th century produced so many. They, too, were to open a rich quarry for future historians of “everyday life.” Advising, steering, and forewarning, they give a precise and detailed picture of life as it was, not just of artistic treasures. Pre-1850 *Baedekers*, the *Murray Guides* of Byron's day, and the *Joanne*, ancestor of the *Guide bleu*, really should be put on computer.

Later, the first Michelin Guides gave mainly the addresses of garages. Still, while waiting for the car to be repaired even the early motorist had to eat. And so, passing from machinery to gastronomy, the Michelin authors found their vocation, place, and role in history: normative, active, legislative, and punitive. Their mission may be to inform *le client*, the man in the street inspecting the menu; even more, one might almost say, they seek to influence the cook. With Michelin, his only choice is megalomania or despair.

J.-F. R.

Double-Checking an Encyclopaedia

The Britannica & Contemporary History—By HARVEY EINBINDER



be influenced by their political beliefs.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS are repositories of established knowledge. This makes it difficult for them to treat contemporary history, politics, and social issues where sharp differences of opinion exist, since the views expressed by contributors may

A decade ago the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* attempted to avoid this difficulty by asking foreign experts to write about their native countries. Many contributors, however, glossed over sensitive social and political issues by furnishing a very flattering portrait of conditions in their native land. Examples included the treatment of Spain, Haiti, South Africa, and the Soviet Union. In 1985, when a new edition of the *Britannica* was published at an editorial cost of \$24 million, its staff revised the articles on foreign countries to avoid the hazard of relying on foreign authorities. Although this produced more

objectivity, it did not correct all the *Encyclopaedia's* omissions.

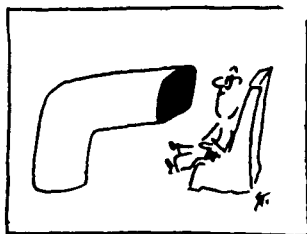
Thus, the article on Paraguay contains a section entitled THE POLITICAL PROCESS that summarises the role of elections and political parties; it concludes with the observation that the political process is "controlled by the party of the chief executive." The article fails to explain that Paraguay has been a military dictatorship for the last 30 years.

History in the *Britannica* is a staid chronological summary, devoid of dramatic climaxes or emotional suspense. Significant events are sometimes allotted a few sentences lost

in a mass of historical detail. Thus the articles on Berlin and on Germany each devote only one sentence to the notorious Wall that has split Berlin in two.

A similar reticence occurs in the biography of Charles de Gaulle, which reports: "On June 18, he broadcast from London his first appeal to his compatriots to continue the war under his leadership." Nothing more is said about the historic radio broadcast that rescued France in 1940 from the dishonour of defeat. The *EB's* biography does not quote his rallying-cry, which has become a part of the nation's conscience—"France is not lost; her empire is still intact; we

Western TV—Surrogate for Freedom?



THERE is a long and respectable history to the idea that totalitarian régimes stand or fall by their seamless control of public information. In the Soviet type of systems in particular, control of the media and of collective memory have long been thought to rank equal

in importance with public control of the means of production and the rule of the party. Single-party rule has been thought to depend on conditioned understanding of the past and regimentation of words and ideas in the present.

YET A MAJOR BREACH has recently occurred in the Eastern European régimes' control of the media, and no doves have been fluttered.

A large part of East Germany, Czechoslovakia and western Hungary has for some years been exposed to Western—Austrian, West German and Swiss—television. A number of small cable networks also bring Western views and news into Hungarian living rooms. Yet there has been no measurable increase in the heartbeat of the East German, Czechoslovak and Hungarian populations.

Consider, further, that rebellious demands for change are said to occur not when despotism is at its most relentless but when the first light appears at the end of the tunnel—and certainly most Central European Communist countries have travelled some distance from the rigours of Stalinism. We have been taught to believe, moreover, that the "free flow of ideas" makes for the freedom of the individual and thus of the society of which he is a member. Is this true without further qualification?

THE THREE COUNTRIES that now have access to Western television represent highly different varieties of Communism. East Germany and Czechoslovakia are under monolithic, though not Stalinist, control. They are replicas of the Soviet model and extensions of Soviet power. One would have expected that the intrusion of uncensored television would have an electrifying effect on deprived East Germans and Czechoslovaks.

GEORGE URBAN, a regular contributor to *ENCOUNTER*, writes occasional columns for "The New York Times" and "The Wall Street Journal." He has been for several years Director of Radio Free Europe in Munich. Among his recent contributions to *ENCOUNTER* are "The People Are Coming!" (Sept.-Oct. 1985) and interviews with Max Kampelman (February and March 1985), Alexander Zinoviev (April 1984), and Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983).

Hungary, too, is an extension of Soviet power but with a whole package of important differences. Perhaps the most spectacular of these is the Hungarian Communists' ability to get away with an information policy that would never pass muster in Moscow or Prague. Western television's lack of a clear political impact on the Hungarian public is, therefore, less difficult to explain than its poor showing in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the whole phenomenon cries out for explanation.

I BELIEVE THAT it may have to do with the notion of "surrogate freedom"—the possibility that certain forms of free information serve as surrogates for liberty rather than spurs for the attainment of liberty.

There appears to have developed in most of Eastern and Central Europe a tacit, albeit bitter acceptance of the Soviet-imposed post-War order. At its most spectacular, this takes the shape of the acceptance in Hungary of Janos Kadar as the benevolent head of an otherwise malign system, and a rather embarrassed admission that Hungarians have learnt to enjoy a grossly opportunistic way of life which, in their heart of hearts, they detest.

Even the much harsher East German and Czechoslovak varieties of the Communist dispensation have come to be looked upon as acts of God that one may, and does, deeply resent but with which it would be futile to argue. And even in restless Poland, few dispute the *de facto* limits of Polish sovereignty in the forecourt of Moscow, though the Poles have not ceased to rage against a geography that has so ill-placed them, and a Western world that has so ill-supported them.

THIS RELUCTANT ACCEPTANCE of the stark realities of their situation does not, however, as some have suggested, amount to any "organic relationship" with Moscow. A weakening in the chain of Soviet control—or any sign of a profound imperial crisis—would immediately refuel the Central and Eastern European peoples' quest for democracy and independence. Creeping centrifugalism, which gained strength under the uncertain Soviet leadership of the last decade, would lead to disintegration and the rout of Soviet power.

In the short and medium terms, however, the Soviet glacié is as safe as the forward defences of any despotism can be—for two reasons. People simply will not sacrifice the little they have on the altar of what seems unattainable. Nor have they been promised any usable support by their natural allies in Western Europe and the United States.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, Western television seems to have become a substitute for freedom rather than a force that would seed demands for political and intellectual liberty. Unlike radio broadcasts of the kind that Radio Free

can still fight." And the article on France does not quote the celebrated slogan; "France has lost a battle, but it has not lost the war."

On the day of de Gaulle's broadcast, few could predict that a new hero had appeared on the stage of French history. This prophetic moment is minimised in the *Britannica's* biography of the General, and it is also slighted in its article on France, which notes that de Gaulle attracted only a handful of Frenchmen at first and that "it was to Pétain, rather, that most of the nation looked for salvation."

Decisive historical events need not require months or

years; a few days or even hours may be sufficient. This was true when members of the Spanish Civil Guard seized the Parliament in Madrid in March 1981, seeking to establish a military government. The conspirators would have succeeded, with the aid of generals who were eager to seize power, if King Juan Carlos had not rallied loyal commanders and put down this military insurrection. The King's resolute action preserved Spanish democracy and revealed him to be a staunch defender of constitutional government; it was a major turning-point in recent Spanish history. But it is not recorded by the *Britannica*, even though it describes events in Spain as recent as 1982. This reticence extends to the King himself. He does not receive a biographical entry, although this honour is awarded to several of his ancestors.

"History", James Joyce remarked, "is a nightmare from which I am trying to wake up." But the nightmares of the 20th century are seldom portrayed in the *Britannica*, which treats history as a dry chronological account devoid of pain or passion. This is evident in its summary of the Viet Nam War, which traces the course of the conflict year by year. Although the war is treated in two separate articles, they do not convey its tragedy and torment, and the bitter divisions it created in American life. Neither article includes any casualty figures. A figure does appear, however, in the essay on the United States, which reports that "nearly 46,000 lives" were lost. But this figure was first published in the *Encyclopaedia* more than a decade ago while the war was still raging, and it does not agree with the figure of 57,939 Americans killed or missing whose names are chiselled on the black granite slabs of the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"Poets", Elie Wiesel has said, "exist so that the dead can vote." But the voice of the poet is rarely heard in the *Britannica*, which embalms those destroyed by bombs and flames with a few brusque sentences. Its essay on INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS records that the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed between 70,000 to 80,000 people; and it notes that the bombing of Dresden "succeeded in obliterating the greater part of one of the most beautiful cities of Europe and in killing at least 35,000 people and perhaps 135,000. . . ." But the *Encyclopaedia* does not attempt to go beyond these figures by supplying either a verbal description of these terrible events or any pictures of wartime destruction. Instead it presents two comprehensive essays on THE TECHNOLOGY and THE THEORY OF WAR that furnish an illuminating analysis of the means and methods by which wars are waged; but these essays do not examine the human toll that wars exact, presumably because this subject is fraught with too much emotion. Characteristically, the photograph illustrating the article on HIROSHIMA depicts the Cenotaph in the Peace Memorial Park decorated with flowers, but the Atomic Bomb Memorial Dome that mark the centre of the blast is barely visible in the remote distance.

BREVITY is one way of avoiding painful events. In two sentences, the entry on ARGENTINA disposes of the terrorism that reigned when General Videla was President, from 1976 to 1981:

"Thousands of citizens were killed or disappeared. The

Europe, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Voice of America specialise in, television seems to make political oppression easier to tolerate because it carries within it the insidious persuasion that as long as "the box" stands, there are easy escapes from the dominion of Communism. In other words, "the medium is the message"; television is freedom; the flickering image blots out the reality of oppression. This may tell us something about Western television, but that would be too easy an answer.

Our most persuasive and grotesque evidence of the neutralising effect of uncensored television comes from the accounts of those East German refugees who, in the licensed exodus of 1984, arrived in especially large numbers from those parts of East Germany that were beyond the reach of West German television (the Dresden gap). They left, they said, because life under the Communist régime was intolerable without the daily offerings of the West German and American image-makers. Evidently they were willing to put up with Erich Honecker as long as they could have their weekly ration of "Dallas." The East German authorities are now, wisely, planning to make West German TV available, through cable and relay stations, to all parts of East Germany—and with Bonn's cooperation.

These are astounding facts with important implications for our understanding of Communist societies in a state of imperfect oppression.

I WOULD NOT like to say without a good deal of further evidence whether "surrogate freedom" explains this curious phenomenon. What is beyond dispute is that our view of how Communist political systems work in Central Europe needs some revision. It is certainly no longer true that the survival of systems of the Soviet type depends in all cases on monolithic control of the means of mass communication. Central Europe's perplexing reaction to Western television seems to suggest that certain kinds of unauthorised communication may help to stabilise the existing order rather than upset it.

If so, the BBC's plans to supplement shortwave foreign broadcasting with satellite television will have to be carefully examined. The line between information that serves as a pain-killer and information likely to encourage is a thin one; but it has to be drawn, and drawn in the full knowledge of the changing correlation of psychological forces behind the Iron Curtain.

It would be a strange reflection on Lenin's dictum if Bolshevik power were to be made secure not, as he thought, by "Soviets plus electrification", but "Soviets plus the electronic message of capitalism." The opium of the people comes in many forms—none more lethal to revolution, or indeed to liberation from the tyranny of revolution, than "Dallas" or "Dynasty."

George Urban

Argentine government, which maintained that it was fighting a civil war, was subjected to much criticism at home and abroad for violations of civil rights."

In a similar fashion, the *EB*'s survey of SOUTHEAST ASIA merely states:

"The régime of Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan gained a reputation of being one of the cruellest in modern history with reports of arrests and mass executions common."

But the article does not portray the genocide that killed a million Cambodians. Instead it blandly observes:

"Phnom Penh was forcibly evacuated and programmes were instituted to reorient the country toward self-sufficiency."

A decade ago the *Britannica* was sharply criticised when Russian authors were commissioned to write about Soviet life. Many of their contributions were subsequently replaced to furnish a more objective account, but some surprising lapses appear in the current edition. The article on SERVITUDE asserts: "During the first five year plan, 1928-32, thousands of rich peasants (kulaks) were driven from their farms under the collectivisation programme"; and it adds, "The Stalinist purge of 1937-38 brought thousands of political 'unreliables' into the camps." The assertion that "thousands" of Russians were sent to the camps is contradicted by the *EB*'s biography of Stalin, which reports that his political victims numbered in the tens of millions, and that as many as ten million peasants may have died as a result of his collectivisation policies.

The *Britannica* has difficulty in portraying 20th-century tyrannies. Its flat, factual approach to contemporary history, its concentration on political events, and its refusal to engage or touch the emotions of readers prevent the *Encyclopaedia* from depicting the evils produced when absolute power is united with ideological certainty. This is evident in its benign view of Chinese communism. Its article on CHINA states:

"Although the governmental and political structure appears to many Westerners to be totalitarian and repressive, it has been seen since the Cultural Revolution to be flexible and responsive to the masses."

The article does not describe the abuses that occurred during the Cultural Revolution, although it devotes almost two pages to "The Great Proletarian Revolution 1966-1969." Instead it pedantically traces political developments year by year, without disclosing the suffering endured by vast numbers of educated Chinese who were uprooted from their homes and forced to work as peasants to alter their beliefs. In discussing Chinese education in 1966, the *Britannica* does not mention that institutions of higher learning were closed by the Red Guards and that professors and students were sent to the

countryside to be "re-educated" by manual labour. Instead it blandly observes:

"Many faculty and staff members were exposed to ideological reform, and not all survived the process."

The *EB*'s biography of Mao Tse-tung asserts that he was so thoroughly identified with the goals of the Cultural Revolution that "an assessment of the man and his life must begin with it." Although the biography notes that "the toll of violence for the years 1966-69" makes "it very hard to take a wholly positive view of the Cultural Revolution", it does not condemn the misery and disorder that resulted. Instead it cautiously claims:

"To what extent the policies advocated during the Cultural Revolution contributed to China's economic development and international prestige is subject to debate."

ALTHOUGH THE EDITORS had made strenuous efforts to maintain a neutral stance and avoid needless controversy, surprising distortions occur in the latest edition. More space is allotted to the Palestine Liberation movement (PLO) than to the history of the state of Israel. Although the article on Palestine assigns two-and-a-half pages to the political and military actions of the PLO led by Yasser Arafat, it fails to record a single terroristic act committed by the PLO. Instead it euphemistically describes the attacks of Palestine guerrillas as "activities against Israel" that produce "the usual heavy Israeli reprisals from air, sea, and land."

The *EB*'s two-page history of the state of Israel neglects important developments by concentrating exclusively on Israel's military and political conflicts with its Arab neighbours. It does not describe the rescue of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Yemen, Iraq, and North Africa after 1948; and it does not mention one of the foundations of the Jewish state: the 1950 "Law of Return" that guarantees to every Jew the right to immigrate to Israel. Instead it devotes half-a-column to the terrorist activities of *Black September* in Jordan. In a similar vein, a separate entry on JERUSALEM claims: "Despite its annexation by Israel, negotiations continued as to the status of the city. . . ."

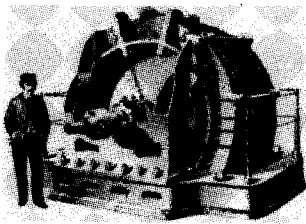
SUCH EXAMPLES illustrate the ease with which bias can enter an encyclopaedia. Although distortions and omissions occur in only a tiny number of entries, their presence raises doubts about the effectiveness of the *Britannica*'s editorial procedures; and they undermine the *Encyclopaedia*'s reliability in treating contemporary history.¹ Consequently, caution is necessary in making use of its account of the wars, social upheavals, and political turmoil that have disfigured modern life.

¹ See my critique, "The Britannica", in *ENCOUNTER*, May 1961.

BOOKS & WRITERS

Files Were Started

On an Uncommonplace Book—By ERIC RHODE



FOR YEARS NOW, rumours and counter-rumours have drifted through the film world about the fate of *Pandaemonium*. Where was it exactly? The last I heard of it (from the poet's daughter) was that it lay in a trunk, in the house of a very ancient historian—a mass of manuscripts, dishevelled and dusty, implying some order that only Humphrey Jennings, its author, might have recognised if he had lived.

One rumour has it that even Jennings had despaired of discovering a form for it. He had laboured on the task of making up a book for about thirteen years, from 1937 until his early death in Greece in 1950, aged forty-three. The incompleteness of the work, the puzzle unsolved, the unexpected death were all of a piece. We had thought, wrongly, that we had understood the range of his career. The publication of *Pandaemonium*¹ gives us the key to a more comprehensive meaning.

It sounds a peculiarly Romantic theme—a man's genius goes into notes and extempores and sketches towards some classical monument, which in the end turns out to be superfluous. In Jennings's case (as so often with the Romantic artist) the public career, though considerable, takes on an unusual depth when compared to the private notations, or fluctuations in thought and feeling, which can only be reclaimed posthumously and with difficulty. *Pandaemonium* often quotes from Coleridge's *Notebooks*: and it is a little like the *Notebooks*—which took so long to be made publishable. As Coleridge realised, the uses of imagination are related to modes of being; and the elucidation of modes of being, like the interpretation of dreams, is seldom easily accomplished.

The seeming incompleteness of Jennings's life, and his broken career as an artist, becomes with the passing of years a myth about the existential meaning of art itself. It would have us presume that art, to be truthful, must be as provisional as

our experience of life. Retroactively, the myth illuminates the fragmented life. The subterranean history of the half-lost manuscript—half-lost to the world, if not to the ancient historian (who has since aged much further, and perished, and left no trace or issue, at least in the published text)—casts an immense light on a buried yet important theme in the content of Jennings's work elsewhere: in his work as Britain's most distinguished film-maker.

He was fascinated by imponderables, by changes which the eye cannot see and which often require great arcs of time to become manifest. He does not concern himself (in the War documentaries) with the sight of great armies passing, or the urgencies of battle, or the indubitably important resolutions of generals and statesmen. It is typical of his approach that in his films about London in the blitz—*London Can Take It* (1940) and *Fires Were Started* (1943)—he should show the King and Queen but not, if I remember rightly, Churchill. He does not focus on heroes and life-and-death actions. He is interested, rather, in the extent to which great actions affect our perception of the imponderable.

The seasons change. We observe the swaying, late-summer grain, or the rime on grass by water in a wintry Cambridgeshire. We come to see how the War must unconsciously influence a passionate identification with the English landscape. An epitome of his interest is a recurring scene in which a woman sits by a wireless, listening to the news. We know from the placing of the scene that she is worried about the fate of her husband on active service. For Jennings, an important meaning of the War can be inferred from the half-blank, refined English anxiety on her face—or just as well from the changing expressions on a baby's face, in a contented pram, miles away from where the bombs are falling. Jennings and E. M. Forster, his scriptwriter on *Diary for Timothy*, discover a connection between great events and the look on a baby's face, *tabula rasa* not so much of the past as of a future—or of a past that still is to be. And so with the manuscript in the trunk: as it awaits publication, the seasons passing, the sunlight glinting, it lies there, exuding a cryptic communication about a past that still has to be achieved: a past that awaits to be discovered by future ancient historians (who at present gaze up at us from contented prams).

In Jennings's view of war, momentous and distant actions modify daily life in the most subtle of ways. We primarily

¹ *Pandaemonium: The Coming of the Machine as seen by contemporary observers 1660-1886*. By HUMPHREY JENNINGS. Edited by MARY-LOU JENNINGS and CHARLES MADGE. André Deutsch, £12.95.

sense these changes in social mannerism, the arts, the climate of the culture. Accurately, Jennings plumbs the subterranean shifts that define the difference between the Britain of 1939 and the Britain of 1945.

AMONG HIS MANY INTERESTS, two are important in understanding the published text: one is his encounter with the Mass-Observation movement, the other is his interest in surrealism.

Taking part (if only marginally) in a Mass-Observation project of 1937 (one of his colleagues being Charles Madge, co-editor with Mary-Lou Jennings of *Pandaemonium*), he became fascinated by the idea that private diaries and letters could be edited together in such a way as to give us a picture of unconscious group processes. The technical problem was to elucidate the underlying motivation.

He presumes that coherence must exist and temperamentally he relates himself to an animistic (and organic) conception of group behaviour. He is opposed to materialism and the social theories of the corpuscular philosophers: the belief that we are hard, atom-like Democritean individuals in a void, at best encountering each other in acts of emotional collision. In one of the *Pandaemonium* link passages he writes, "When the enclosures forced the country-dwellers off the land they not only expropriated the people but also expropriated poetry, which has its roots in the emotional links of man to the land and of man to man in a common society."

Elsewhere he tells us that his idea of poetry endorses a belief in something like animism. He is outraged by more than some violation of justice in the abstract. He feels the relationship of the self to the land or to others in a quite animistic way, as though the land or others were as much a part of the self as hands or feet. To be separated from them is to be mutilated. He fears the machine much as an animist might, as something that will take over the body and render the mind passive. Machines extinguish creativity, they put out the divine spark: I think he really believed something like this. At the same time, he worked with film cameras and movieolas.

HE BEGAN his researches on *Pandaemonium* while collating Mass-Observation reports on the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people concerning Coronation Day 1937. The reports and diaries and impressions of the participants were limited to one day and bounded by the frontiers of one country: no one, it seemed, could avoid thinking about the great event; it exercised an unconscious pull over them; the white cliffs of Dover were like some magical boundary. In *Pandaemonium* the reading is also kept to English texts and to the idea of an unconscious pull: but the impressions are spread out less over space than over time—over a period extending from 1660 to 1886.

If we compare his scheme to E. J. Dijksterhuis's masterly study *The Mechanisation of the World Picture* we may wonder at the price to be paid for insularity—for surely an important

point about corpuscular philosophy in the 17th century was that it was an European activity.

Yet the price is less heavy than it might seem. The limitation Jennings imposes on himself obliges him to scour his English sources. He discovers in Robert Hooke's *Micrographia*, for instance, a number of the themes he might otherwise, and more obviously, have illustrated from the later writings of Descartes. Some of his quotations—from Nehemiah Grew on "the great goggle-eyed [sic] beetle" (one of the first instances of an animal being described as a machine), Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck's memoirs, Fanny Kemble's *Records of a Childhood* or Faraday's diary—make me want to hurry to the library. As an anthology, *Pandaemonium* is constantly vivifying.

His talent, as opposed to his personality, was insular. He was inspired as a film-maker by the blitzing of England—not England as a symbol for liberty, but England as an actual territory, a sacred piece of land. His interests were less narrow than his talent. He looked to France for cultural nourishment. He was a translator of Eluard and a lifelong friend to Eluard and his wife. He thought of himself as a surrealist painter rather than a writer or film-maker (working in a style that has some affinity to Magritte, another friend).

And surrealism plays some part in the way he fits together his quotations—not so much in his looking for incongruous juxtapositions (of which there are few) as in the belief that the quotations, which he called "images", often have a richness of meaning that escapes the critic. In this he relates surrealism to the older Romantic view, which Coleridge would have acknowledged, that images are always like images in dreams, repositories of an infinite and uncontrollable range of meaning.

At this point I shall leap from one comparison to another in the manner of Jennings and suggest that this conception of image has a similar, if drier delineation in the theories of his tutor at Cambridge, I. A. Richards, and in the theories of his friend and Cambridge contemporary, William Empson. The ramifications between friendship—"the emotional links between man and man in a common society"—and theory continue to open out in a way that invites a thesis on the less blunt aspects of Cambridge culture in the 1930s. Another undergraduate friend was Jacob Bronowski, whose views on Blake, or the ascent of man, can be read in illuminating conjunction with *Pandaemonium*.

THE IMAGE around which the whole project is intended to swing is drawn from the famous passage in the first book of *Paradise Lost* in which Satan and his crew rifle the earth for ribs of gold and build their "fabrick huge" known as Pandaemonium. Jennings wants to remind us of an obvious and often-made point: Milton in vision anticipates the violations of, and awesome energies released by, the Industrial Revolution. Coleridge, who elsewhere in the text is presented, oddly, as a victim of alienation, describes the later empire in Hell in a letter to Robert Southey:

"It was truly sublime—the enormous Blaze, the regular

yet complex intertwisting Strokes of between 20 and 30 men, with their huge Flail-hammers . . . the Iron DRIPPING like a Millwheel from the intense white Heat—verily it was an unforgettable scene! The poor men are pitiable slaves—from 4 in the morning they work till 9 at night, & yet are paid less than any other in the yard.”

The analogy between the building of Satan’s kingdom and the industrial exploitation of the first machine age soon breaks down. The devils were able to raise their fabric effortlessly—it rose, Milton tells us, like an exhalation. The satanic and seemingly effortless power of machines does not exclude the need for painful human labour: rather, it increases the need.

The comparison between hell and industrialism, if it can be made, has to be more subtle. Consider the unusual nature of Jennings’s hypothesis that the future can be predicted. Milton’s poem foreshadows the future; his insight into colonial greed, let us say, allows him to anticipate the debauched landscape of the future. We are asked to presume that if the unconscious pull in society exists in time, it does not exist within a historian’s chronological sense of time. A history of unconscious group-processes would play havoc with the natural or biological order of events.

Consider, too, the complexity of feelings in the Milton passage—which Blake hinted at when he suggested that Milton was of the Devil’s own party. In the eye of an observer like Thomas Gray, quoted here, the drudgery and degradation of the industrial worker are less apparent than the awesome nature of the industrial landscape, which vies in terrible power with any Romantic depiction of rocks and mountains and storms. Jennings’s War documentaries convey a similar fascination: with the incandescent pulse of the steel furnace and the assembly-line briskness of the munitions factory—a fascist aesthetic justified, it would seem, when used in the service of an honourable war.

Milton tells us that within the space of an hour the Devil created a fabric more magnificent than any human work of art—a startling claim. The devil’s empire not only anticipates the blaze of industrial and social revolutions: it anticipates the Romantic conception of imagination as a supreme power, god-like and dangerously dissolving the order of nature.

IN THE SAME WAY industrialism, while blackening and be-fogging the metropolis—Jennings collects many depictions of London as a kind of catacomb—also provides the imagination with an emblem for great imaginative enactments. It converts everything into operatic spectacle: never mind if the stage-hands are crushed. A commentator in the *Quarterly Review* of December 1948 describes a moment at Euston Station—as fantasciated in manner as a symphony by Berlioz. . . .

“The stars of heaven cast a faint silvery light through the long strips of plateglass in the roof above the platform. On a sudden is heard—the stranger hardly knows from whence—the mysterious moan of compressed air, followed by the ringing of a bell. That instant every gaslight on and above the curve of 900 feet bursts into full power. The carriages, cabs, &c. appear, comparatively

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experienced as another aspect of *apartheid*.
 fairy work."

Applied Science, possibly more than political action, brings about the (often) imaginative transformation of the world—entailing imaginary as well as real hurts and guilts. A geologist, Sir Charles Lyell, cannot contemplate the wonder of the world's huge fabric without a certain grief at the satanic sublime: in the funereal shadows of a mine, he looks up at the huge coal-trees that exist deep down within the earth, and he mourns Pandaemonium.

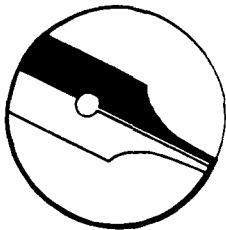
"The heavy column falls suddenly in a perpendicular or oblique direction from the roof of the gallery when coal has been extracted, wounding and killing the workmen who stand below. It is strange to reflect how many thousands of these trees fell originally in their native forests in obedience to the law of gravity; and how the few

which continued to stand erect, obeying, after myriads of ages, the same force, are cast down to immolate their human victims."

Editing *Pandaemonium* must have been an industrial drudgery of the first order, heroically discharged. I wish Jennings had left more signposts and links, and had extended his stimulating commentaries further. By one inclination, he supported a Marxist view of history; by another, he would have us think that the only determinants in human life are feeling and the contingent nature of our impressions. The imagination will not be categorised—it is like Blake's robin redbreast, whose caging puts all heaven in a rage. Blake, possibly the most powerful and most sane figure (after Milton) to stride through *Pandaemonium*, is someone who over the years has appeared to become more and more important as a commentator on our culture. To a much lesser extent, we may find the same will be true of Jennings.

Echoes of Empire (v)

Apartheid & English Poetry in South Africa—By COLIN STYLE



POETRY IN ENGLISH in South Africa has always laboured under an acute sense of inferiority. In an introduction to a 1976 poetry anthology, *A World of Their Own: Southern African Poets of the Seventies*, André Brink described the contents as a "tribute to a most remarkable new explosion of vigour and talent in Southern African English literature." He noted that this "implies nothing less than a definitive emancipation from the last vestiges of literary colonialism." An impressive claim. However, I came across another article, in *The Sewanee Review*—"A. D. Hope and Australian Poetry" by Bruce King, who describes the immature phase in a colonial poetry as exhibiting "a provincialism which includes both nationalistic affirmations and pathetic attempts to keep up with the *avant-garde*."

Does André Brink's puffery smack of the immature phase? In fact, he is making three claims in one. First, that the quality of English South African poetry is impressive. Second, that this quality is of an original, regional nature. And finally, that it is cleansed of the taint of colonialism, both in terms of literary dependence on England and as an attitude of mind. How this transcendence has been achieved is not quite certain, since the poetry is being produced in a country where *apartheid*—that legacy of Empire and colour-bar—is still firmly entrenched. Indeed, a fair quantity of poetry in English, by the white poets, seems equivocal in its attitude to

apartheid. Ignoring it surely indicates something about the attitude of a poet?

André Brink's assertion is also a little unfair to earlier South African poets like Roy Campbell, William Plomer, Charles Madge, F. T. Prince, and R. N. Currey. These poets are of genuine eminence in that all of them are almost obligatory to omnibus English anthologies abroad. F. T. Prince's "Soldiers Bathing", for example, must be one of the most widely anthologised post-War poems. Has *any* South African poet of the 1970s and '80s done the same? The evidence for such "hooray, we've made it" is feeble. On this basis of comparison, today's South African poets are epigones.

Nevertheless, it does seem that these poets of the Campbell era lack a specifically South African flavour. They belong to the wider English-language world. Could this be because they were writing in a pre-*apartheid* era? I am not so sure. Historically, as a developed philosophy in action, *apartheid* seems a fairly recent phenomenon, dating from 1948 when the Nationalist Party came to power. It means, of course, the doctrine of total, institutionalised, legal separation of the races. However, it is safe to say a *de facto apartheid* has always existed. It covers the institution of slavery in the early 19th century; the wars between Bantu, Boer, and Briton, and the usurpations of territories and lands; the inequalities of sweated labour in the diamond and gold mines; and, in the 20th century, before 1948, the colour-bar and general denial of political opportunities. And, as South Africa moves closer to civil warfare in the future, this will be viewed

and experienced as another aspect of *apartheid*.

So *apartheid* has always dropped as a barrier between the poet and non-socio-political experience. Even avoiding it is to acknowledge its existence. Back in 1958, in *A Book of South African Verse*, Guy Butler, who selected and introduced the anthology, commented:

"Most of our poets have tried to belong to Africa, and, finding her savage, shallow and uncooperative, have been forced to give their allegiance, not to any other country, but to certain basic conceptions. In their searchings and journeys they have, naturally enough, 'driven back on predetermined courses' to their European origins. What rest or stability they find is not in any particular place, but on principles: the integrity of the individual; the duty to seek the truth and proclaim it; the command to love thy neighbour."

Butler saw the limitations then, and identified the problem as (white) poets finding Africa too violent, torrid, and inimical to poetic utterance and symbol. However, in that paragraph he included a Trojan horse of truth. Commenting on "love thy neighbour", he half-consciously identified a genuine problem with white English poets which might explain this lack of a sharply honed regionalism. Copious samplings from a century of poetry expose a comfortable piety. The tendency to treat the black as a suffering minority encouraged the language and form of the broader English liberal-cum-Romantic tradition, as in these verses from "Lazarus" by A. S. Cripps (1869-1952):

*I watched him at the banquet wait—
The drunken banquet grossly plann'd—
The serf who held his master's fate
In hollow of his swarthy hand.*

*O dark, meek Mephistopheles,
Safe in your hand a soul you hold:
Th'inevitable end he sees
No more than Dives saw of old.*

Today, to write of "dark, meek Mephistopheles", with its patronising overtones, would invite a flashback from the Black Consciousness Movement. The piety is now subtler. Even an outstanding contemporary poet like Douglas Livingstone can write, in "Dust":

*He had been tough: moved gracefully, with ease.
We'd bricked, built walls, carted sand;
pitting strength against cement-bags, we'd seize
and humpf, steadied by a hand.
I paid the regulation wage plus fifty
per cent, his room, his board. He wasn't thrifty.*

Liberal guilt forces the obligatory aside to keep up ethical credibility.

This trend, however, could be disappearing. From about the time of the Soweto riots of 1976, a starker sensibility is growing: an awareness of the change in status of the black population from being a suffering "minority" into being regarded as what it is—a majority with muscle. The course of events in next-door Zimbabwe has assisted in the demise of

the old sensibility. The immigrant Zimbabwean poet, John Eppel, provides the ominous model in "Except in Poems I Won't Look Back":

*The click was picked up by a thousand
christmas beetles. With ringing ears we
inspected these remains of my child-
hood. Pioneer bush blocked the front
entrance. The roof was gone. We tiptoed
over the rubble to the lounge. Above
the brick mantelpiece where our Laughing
Cavalier used to hang, just there,
the crude charcoal drawing of a child.
Her hair fell straight to the shoulders. She
was standing naked, pulling open
her vagina. "I want you Couplet Jim",
said a bubble from her mouth. We held hands.
The other walls were covered in Zanu
slogans and genitalia—in the style
of Couplet Jim. Penises like adders,
vaginas like holes in the ground. Forward
with the struggle. Pamberi. Pamberi.*

The white liberal poet is being jolted out of his comfortable stance—a position that Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement attacked vigorously, making it clear that the days of white cultural and literary stage-management were over. A situation that a number of white writers have profited from personally in the past.

IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN whether white English poetry will find a satisfactory trade-off between the narrowing cultural base and loss of dominance and a compensatory honesty and starkness of sensibility. Probably not yet. André Brink's extravagant proclamation of 1976 remains unfulfilled.

But black poets writing in English also have problems in handling *apartheid*. Black *apartheid* poetry is distinctive, and the abrasive protest and anger authentic—how could it not be? In fact, *apartheid* has stimulated poetry to an extent. The problem with the writings from the huge ghettos of Soweto is in the unremitting theme and subject and battery of images. The monstrous excrescence of the system has bred an obsessively repetitious literature. Bernard Shaw analysed such a phenomenon acutely in *John Bull's Other Island*:

"Nationalism stands between Ireland and the rest of the world . . . a healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a healthy man of his bones. But if you break a nation's nationality it will think of nothing else but getting it set again. It will listen to no reformer, to no philosopher, to no preacher, until the demand of the Nationalist is granted. It will attend to no business, however vital, except the business of unification and liberation. . . . There is indeed no greater curse to a nation than a nationalist movement which is only the agonizing symptom of a suppressed natural function."

Under such pressures, much of black verse is slack, over-pitched rhetoric. Having right on your side is not always the handmaiden to artistic achievement; even taking the best

poetry, I have always wondered whether “the pen is mightier than the sword.” The poets who have been persecuted and prosecuted in South Africa are those who are activists as well.

There are, of course, some fine poets. For example, a *Guardian* reviewer commented on Dennis Brutus’s *Letters to Martha*: “. . . he has a grace and penetration unmatched even by Alexander Solzhenitsyn.” And Oswald Mtshali still packs, for me, a sizzling style and cornucopia of fresh, strong images. I specify “for me” because Mtshali has been rejected by black poets and intellectuals in South Africa. This seems puzzling since he is so vitriolically against *apartheid* and white dominance. He is certainly no Uncle Tom. The objection is that Mtshali is held to write in a tone, content, and imagery that appeal to white, not black, consciousness. He conforms to the *passé* white liberal mode of satirising the humiliations and institutions of *apartheid* at a time when black radical opinion is eyeing the reins of power.

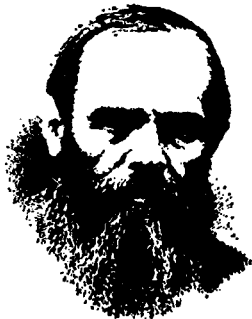
WHAT, THEN, about life after *apartheid* for the poet writing in English? Such conjecture sparks off the old debate between

“art” and “relevance”—more explicitly, the gap between those poets who sedulously avoid *apartheid* and those who are totally absorbed by it. The poets of “art” comfort themselves that they are writing to eternal literary standards which will reassert themselves when *apartheid* has been swept away. The “relevance” poets hold that literature concerns itself with today’s human issues and ceases to be valid literature if it does not.

However, the reader and critic of the 21st century, whether black or white, could find much of *apartheid* poetry grown stale, monotonous, and irrelevant. Perhaps the “relevance” poets are not disappointed with this scenario of the future. After all, they do not claim that poetry should do anything more than be applied to contemporary socio-political issues. The poets of “art” would certainly be dismayed and hope that their poetry escapes the time-warp—hankering, as they do, after “immortality” and such romantic notions of the poet’s status. The problem is that *they* might be seen as being selective and not seeing the whole steadily. The ivory tower, arguably, is eternally irrelevant. It seems that no one escapes the bleak scenario. Will *apartheid*, distorted and destructive to the end, consume the poets of its era with itself?

The Stenography of Love

A Russian Diary—By RÜDIGER GÖRNER



ON 14 APRIL 1867, at five o’clock in the afternoon of a “beautifully clear” day, a young couple left St Petersburg Central Station for a belated honeymoon in Germany. The circumstances of the journey were less romantic. The family of the well-reputed but impoverished husband, Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, treated his young wife with suspicion and contempt; he had enormous debts caused by the collapse of two literary magazines (*Wremja* and *Epocha*) which he had founded with his brother Michail; and in addition he felt morally obliged to support his brother’s family and his stepson Paul (the son of his first wife, Maria Isayeva, who had died almost exactly two years before from tuberculosis).

The twenty-year-old Anna Grigorjewna had enjoyed a modern and open-minded education for a girl of her time. The daughter of a Civil Servant of the higher ranks and a lady of Swedish extraction, she had been encouraged to learn as much as possible and was sent to the first *Gymnasium* for girls in St Petersburg. Both parents knew that only education could provide independence for their daughter, and Anna was eager to apply whatever she had learnt and to extend her knowledge. This inclination had encouraged her, at the

beginning of 1866, to attend a course in stenography given by Professor Olkhin.

While Anna Grigorjewna was studying Olkhin’s method of shorthand and, immensely excited by the discovery of this new world of stenographic signs and symbols, was making rapid progress, something more dramatic happened in Petersburg to her future husband, Fyodor Dostoevsky. His name had been familiar to her since childhood—he was her father’s “favourite author”, and she was to confess in her *Reminiscences* decades later that she had been “enraptured with his works and had wept over *Notes from the House of the Dead*.” Now she was reading *Crime and Punishment*, not knowing that she would in the near future see the original of the protagonist’s lodgings, Dostoevsky’s present flat: Apartment No 13, Stolyarny Lane, on the corner of Little Meshchanskaya Street. There the great writer was trapped into accepting humiliating terms for a publisher’s advance: if a new novel were not delivered by 1 November 1866, the firm would have the right to publish all his works for the next nine years without paying him a thing.

Dostoevsky, in a panic about this traumatic situation, desperately needed secretarial assistance in order to meet the deadline. Friends recommended that he contact Professor Olkhin; and Olkhin suggested that Dostoevsky employ his best student, Anna Grigorjewna, as a temporary secretary. Three weeks later he finished dictating *The Gambler* to

Anna, and on 15 February 1867 they were married in Izmailovsky Cathedral. With Anna's vigorous assistance, Dostoevsky succeeded in capturing the haunting experiences of gambling he had lived through himself in several spas in Germany in 1863. At the time Anna could not possibly have imagined that she was quite soon to experience what the most admired and then beloved master had dictated to her.

Through dealing literarily with the subject of gambling, Dostoevsky seemed to have intensified his passion for tempting fortune once more. The novel did not provide the means for self-purification. His vice was soon to threaten him again—and his young wife. However, we find in Anna's diary, *Die Reise in den Westen* (*The Journey to the West*),¹ frequent references to *The Gambler*, which she loved regardless of its fateful motif. Undoubtedly she much preferred the story about the work on that novel to the reality of gambling. Her husband's weakness caused her suffering and despair. She was tormented by the dark prospect of permanent poverty, and increasingly exhausted by her endless trips to the pawnbroker. Yet she felt overwhelmed and privileged as well because Dostoevsky loved her, and the pages of her diary reflect her gratitude.

IN THOSE HARD TIMES, Anna never tired of keeping a regular diary. For that she gave several reasons in her memoirs:

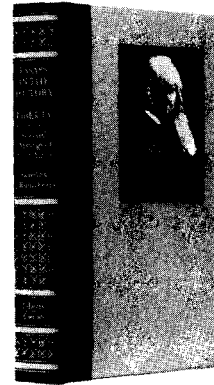
"Amid the welter of new impressions, I was afraid of forgetting details; moreover, the daily practice was a reliable way of keeping up my shorthand and perhaps even improving it. But the main reason was a different one. My husband was such an interesting and enigmatic person to me that I felt it would be easier to get to know and unriddle him if I wrote down his ideas and observations. On top of that, I was quite alone abroad; there was no one for me to share my observations with, let alone the doubts that sometimes arose, and my diary was a friend to whom I confided all my thoughts, hopes and fears."

Indeed, the linguistic signs of Anna's "friend" were illegible to Dostoevsky, and his young wife knew how to keep her secrets. But Dostoevsky did not mind this; apparently he never mistrusted Anna. She, however, did from time to time question her husband's faithfulness—although he was, in this respect, blameless. According to her, Dostoevsky confessed to her on his deathbed: "Remember this, Anya, I always loved you passionately and was never unfaithful to you even in my thoughts."

Reading through Anna's diary, one gains the impression of a (splendidly deciphered) "stenography of love." Her shorthand had improved technically during 1867, as she expected it would; so had her endurance. She needed this will-power if she was not to succumb to the perilous vice of her husband, or be demoralised by his frequent epileptic attacks, which required—often night after night, even during her first pregnancy—her understanding care.

¹ *Tagebücher: Die Reise in den Westen*. By ANNA GRIGORJEVNA DOSTOJEVSKAYA. Edited and translated by BARBARA CONRAD. Athenäum Verlag Königstein.

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AT FIRST, Anna expected from her journey excitement and stimulating "cultural" experiences. But she could not help feeling bored and annoyed by a society which consisted, in her eyes, of dull and petty-minded people who regarded the Dostoevskys as odd representatives of a rather alien species, wearing the wrong clothes and carrying funny umbrellas. As she wrote on 16 June 1867:

"What a country—some of its people have a bent back, some are paralysed, others are blind or deaf—it is strange with these fellows here."

Berlin did not impress her greatly. She sensed instinctively that the capital of Prussia and of the newly founded "North German Federation" represented nothing but an assembly of *nouveaux riches*. She had expected a city full of culture and traditional meaning, and the Dostoevskys were to find it in Dresden, "Florence on the Elbe", as it was called for centuries. Anna enjoyed walking on the Brühl terrace high above the Elbe, going to the Royal Theatre, and, of course, visiting the famous galleries of the Zwinger.

ANNA'S DIARY OF 1867, now published in this German translation, is on the whole more descriptive than reflective, but it is by no means "naive." Considering her age, Anna surprises us by the way she treated Dostoevsky's inner tension and his increasingly painful irritation about almost everything. The couple suffered again and again from "unnecessary" arguments, usually sparked off by trivialities. Anna knew that Dostoevsky too felt isolated in their new surroundings; depressed by their financial situation, he was desperate to change it through gambling. Her comment on the eve of his departure for a gambling spa reads as follows:

"If I am glad that he is leaving it is not because of the prospect that he might win (quite honestly I cannot imagine his winning), but because I can see that he is gradually growing stale here, and more and more irritated."

In the autumn of that year, in Baden-Baden, she is even more precise about her husband's inability to win:

"His success might have been complete—but only on condition that this system be applied by some coolheaded Englishman or German and not by such a nervous and impulsive person as my husband, who went to the uttermost limits in everything."

A letter written by Dostoevsky to his wife on 22 May 1867 confirmed her theory:

"I had altogether *twenty* gulden left in my pocket (just in case), and I took a chance on *ten* gulden. I used almost supernatural efforts to remain calm and calculating *for a whole hour*, and wound up winning 300 gulden. I was so overjoyed, and had such a terrible, almost *mad* desire to finish off everything right there, that *very day*, to win perhaps twice that amount and then leave immediately,

that I threw myself at the roulette table. Without giving myself a chance to rest and collect my thoughts, I took to betting gold pieces, and lost *everything, everything*, to the last kopeck, i.e. all I had left was two gulden for tobacco."

Although Anna in her *Reminiscences* makes us believe that she never reproached her husband for his losses and never quarrelled with him about them, we get a different impression from her diary. It is true that she realised eventually how important it was to him to go even to the utmost extremes in gambling and risking everything—in order to cure him in the long run. But she recorded arguments on the subject, and her annoyance at the fact that he expected every support for his vice, and even took it for granted that his mother-in-law would send money as often as possible (which she did).

Anna never argued with Dostoevsky in a condescending manner; she tried to share his experience, and decided one day to go to the tables herself so as to understand better what was going on in these glamorously illuminated salons behind the thick velvet curtains. There she found, as she afterwards confessed to her diary, how easy it was to be captivated by the sheer lust for gambling. "At first I was still able to consider where I placed my stake . . . but then I lost this ability completely."

In Dresden Anna used to comfort herself, in all her "loving sorrow" (her expression), by going to the art gallery and looking at her favourite painting—Murillo's *Madonna and Child*—almost certainly projecting on to it her deep religious feeling and her wish for a child. Her compensation in Baden-Baden consisted of literature—and the hope that life in Paris or Geneva might be better. She hated artificiality, and in particular the contrast between Baden-Baden's provinciality and its pretended wealth. She once noted: "I hate the struggle between daylight and the light of lamps."

AND LITERATURE? She was very fond of Dickens's *Little Dorrit* and even more of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. It is quite touching to read in her diary, days after the Dostoevskys had acquired *Madame Bovary*, the following lines:

"Fedja is wrong if he thinks that I am dependent on him and that I have to do what he wants! It is high time that he dropped this stupid assumption."

Yet Anna is not the ideal heroine of Women's Liberation. It took only one remark from her husband to soften her.

"Today he told me that I had given him so many new emotions and thoughts, which will help him to become a better person. This made me very happy."

But, she adds, he was angry because she was lying on his bed—not yet undressed. Anna tended to write more about her husband's passion for gambling than about his passion for her: but she alluded to it in images of almost artistic subtlety.

Dostoevsky was not only Anna's passionate husband and never-boring partner: whenever possible, he cared for her. Especially during her pregnancy, when he started work on *The Idiot*. On 1 October 1867, Anna wrote that Fjodor had drafted a new novel. The notebook he used was the one that contained the notes for *Crime and Punishment*. One cannot

suppress a smile when reading the following after this dry, almost bibliographical fact:

"After lunch, when Fedja is not at home, I usually read what he has written before; but this I never tell him; otherwise he would be very angry with me. And why should I make him angry? I certainly don't want him to hide his notebooks; it does not matter if he thinks that I haven't the faintest idea what he is doing."

Anna's diary not only records her love for her husband; it is also the diary of a Russian patriot, who shared with Fedja an unconditional love for their country. Both agreed to reject their fellow-countryman, Ivan Turgenev, for his anti-Russian attitudes. They longed for news from Russia: even more, they longed to be there when their daughter Sonya died suddenly, at the age of three months. Dostoevsky blamed the tragedy

on the bad weather in Geneva. "It could not have happened in Russia", was his comment.

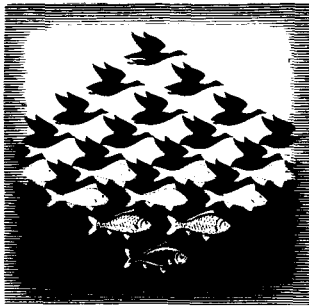
It seems that Anna sensed, after their move from Baden-Baden to Geneva, how indispensable she had become. In the third part of her diary she sounds much more self-assured, though there is poignancy in a minute detail of her frequent recollections of the day she met Dostoevsky for the first time.

"Between the windows stood a large mirror in a black wooden frame. Since the space was considerably larger than the mirror, the latter, for convenience, had been moved to the right-hand window, which produced a very unattractive and unsymmetrical effect. I found that very strange, for I am used to symmetry."

Dostoevsky's state of mind at the time was very unbalanced. Anna's role was to give him that solid symmetry.

Stepping Eastward

Recent Novels—By NEIL BERRY



AMONG THE MOST POPULAR films shown in London in 1985 was *Letter to Brezhnev*, an amateur production by a group of out-of-work Liverpoolians. The film offered the opinion that life on once-flourishing Merseyside had become so grimly impoverished and constricted that many of its inhabitants could

hardly be worse off in the Soviet Union. Coincidentally, around the time of the film's release, a London political columnist was to be found observing that under its present leadership Britain is materially, and perhaps in other respects as well, nearer to an East European State than at any time since the end of the Attlee Government in 1951. He went on to cite, among other things, the Government's insistence that all will come right in the end—even as large numbers of depressed Britons shuffle along the pavements, idle but not enjoying their leisure, and distracting themselves with strong drinks.

The novelist Beryl Bainbridge will have clear memories of the Attlee years. She grew up (in Liverpool as it happens) in the 1940s and '50s, the so-called Age of Austerity. And if her fiction typically seems soaked in the grey, ration-book atmosphere of the period, that does nothing to lessen its topicality in our new Age of Austerity, which is not discontinuous with the last one. Bainbridge's characters are a luckless, sometimes brutish lot. "Bread and Butter Smith",

a story in her recent collection of short fiction,¹ set in post-War Liverpool and evocative of its grin-and-bear-it spirit, concerns a non-communicating couple who used to spend Christmas in a Liverpool hotel. The husband/narrator recalls how Smith, a fellow guest, would join them for Christmas dinner, always eating his regular four slices of bread and butter along with a few cuts of breast. Growing exasperated with the attention Smith pays to his wife, the husband fabricates for her a murky private life. The point, we gather, is that Smith is a prude who confines his romantic aspirations to sedate dances with respectable married ladies. With chilling imperceptiveness, the husband mentions that Smith killed himself and that his wife ended up in a mental hospital. Smith, apparently, had been an annual ray of light in her otherwise dim existence.

Smith's isn't the only suicide in these stories. The concluding tale, "Helpful O'Malley", deals with a seedy rent-collector who inveigles lonely girl tenants into gassing themselves. But Beryl Bainbridge isn't always so gruesome, though her forte is black comedy sustained by unflinching irony. The funniest moments in her fiction stem from the embarrassments incurred by extra-marital sex. In "The Worst Policy", neurotic, self-conscious Sarah has contrived at last to meet her fancy man by borrowing a friend's house for the afternoon. As they begin to grapple with one another, the friend's son, for whom Sarah reserves a long-standing loathing, suddenly clambers in through the window.

The world of Beryl Bainbridge, full of shabbiness and struggle, offers little scope for personal happiness or for social harmony. In dingy, cluttered rooms her knobbly, demoralised, utterly unheroic characters blunder from one humiliation to the next. Inadequates to the last man and woman, they appear victims of a cripplingly limited culture.

¹ *Mum and Mr Armitage: Selected Stories*. By BERYL BAINBRIDGE. Duckworth, £7.95.

Her fiction might be considered not so far removed in its implications from *Letter to Brezhnev*, though she herself is probably well-advised to stay in Britain. Describing the misfortunes of misfits and deviants has made her famous here, whereas in the Communist bloc it might have landed her in serious trouble. Recently, moreover, in the course of retracing J. B. Priestley's *English Journey* for British television, she had the opportunity to return to her native city and to announce, having first cast a baleful eye over it, that "somebody murdered Liverpool and got away with it."

Here is an example of a writer enjoying a status and a license to criticise that would be the envy of many of her counterparts in Eastern Europe. And yet to what purpose, they might wonder. If it's trite to say so, it's none the less true that while in a country like Britain writers can utter any amount of dissent with impunity, they pay the price of not being taken all that seriously.

PHILIP ROTH is exercised by the paradoxes of the writer's position in the West as compared with the East. In *The Prague Orgy*,² which seems to represent the last instalment of his Zuckerman saga, the harassed American literary superstar and veteran of a trilogy of mishaps is told by an exiled Czech writer named Sisovsky that the weight of stupidity which Zuckerman must bear from dull-witted reviewers is far worse than the experience of being banned. A suppressed book, it's implied, has a far better chance of finding a discerning readership and of being properly appreciated than any American bestseller—even if it can't be expected to change the world.

In Prague, where, urged by Sisovsky, he goes to attempt to rescue 200 allegedly masterly short stories written by Sisovsky's father, Zuckerman receives further reminders of the dubious easiness of his fame and access to publicity. Under constant surveillance, everybody appears to live for drink and sex. Nevertheless, Czech life as described by Zuckerman possesses an energy and high-spiritedness, even an elegance, with which he is unfamiliar.

Roth's deft little story—it tells how Zuckerman meets Sisovsky's alcoholic, nymphomaniac wife in the hope of wresting from her her father-in-law's short stories—is filled

out with comments, mostly in a droll vein, on literary life as experienced on different sides of the Iron Curtain. Informed that menial work in Czechoslovakia is being done by writers, teachers and construction workers, while the country is run by crooks, Zuckerman suddenly imagines what his American rivals might be doing if similar circumstances prevailed in his own country. He sees William Styron washing glasses in a Penn Station bar-room; Susan Sontag wrapping buns in a Broadway bakery; Gore Vidal bicycling salamis to school lunchrooms in Queens; and he sees himself sweeping the filthy floor. "Mightier than the sword?" That's not how the pen seems here. Still, where the writer is thwarted and where the censor rules, talk and oral narrative evidently flourish. "Story-telling", Zuckerman observes, "is the form their resistance has taken."

Ironically, it transpires that Zuckerman may have been "told a story" by Sisovsky, and been fool enough to believe it. Could Sisovsky have been thinking of publishing his father's work under his own name and Zuckerman have been set in motion by a "strategically designed fiction"? At any rate, at the end of the book, it is Roth the joker who remains firmly in charge, as his alter ego Zuckerman, self-exposed as a schlemiel, recounts the arrival of officials intent on putting him on the next plane out of Prague.

SOME READERS may find Roth's book unduly frivolous. A more serious treatment of similar themes can be found in some of the stories in Joyce Carol Oates's collection, *Last Days*.³ "My Warszawa: 1980", her most notable fictional excursion into the Communist world, concerns the visit to Poland of Judith Horne, an acclaimed American writer, and her lover.

Oates's is a style of minute observation—it comes as no surprise that Judith is reading Henry James—and the erratic flow of feeling between the lovers is at least as meticulously evoked as their experience of Poland itself. But so far as we see Warsaw, it is a much bleaker place than Roth's Prague. Poland, Judith ingenuously remarks at one point, seems less a Communist than an occupied country. Her interlocutor, an American diplomat, agrees, observing that the very air of Poland is poisoned. The Poles of the story have sad, pouched eyes and bracketed mouths, and they smoke until their throats must burn. Eastern Europe, Judith's boyfriend remarks, is a strain on everybody's nerves, and Judith, preoccupied with the heart's intermittences, is not inclined to demur. Judith's Warsaw is a wretched dark night of the soul. She flies home, blinking tears from her eyes and recognising nothing.

One may feel that Joyce Carol Oates is more interested in the impact of Eastern Europe on a refined Western sensibility than she is in exploring the Polish spirit. It's true that the story is entitled "My Warszawa", but in contrast to *The Prague Orgy*, it never so much as hints that (in some of its

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² *The Prague Orgy*. By PHILIP ROTH. Jonathan Cape, £5.95.

³ *Last Days*. By JOYCE CAROL OATES. Jonathan Cape, £8.95.

aspects at least) life in a totalitarian society may have a sharper flavour than in a nominally free one.

AT LEAST ONE recent example of Polish literature suggests that a numbed sensibility is the inevitable concomitant of Polish experience in the 1980s. Janusz Anderman is a young Polish author belonging to the generation whose formative experience was the growth of *Solidarity* and the collapse of the hopes originally invested in it with the imposition of Martial Law in 1981. The short stories collected in the slim volume *Poland under Black Light*⁴ were originally published under the title *Breathless*, and it is hard to see why they shouldn't have retained it. Written in response to a national trauma, they do indeed, as Stanislaw Baranczak's introduction points out, convey a sense of suffocation—all the stronger, perhaps, for their brief, elliptical character. Many of them are barely a page in length, and occupy some indeterminate position between lyric and prose narrative.

Here again, captured in agonised glimpses, is a society where spying is ubiquitous, where everybody is under pressure and where, in the face of the inexorable State juggernaut, no individual can realise his potential. "The hatred cultivated in the people of this country", runs the conclusion to a catalogue of everyday brutalities, "does not

allow them to think; the unrelenting hunt for victims leaves no time for it. . . ." Anderman's plangent pieces read like *samizdat* fragments pressed through the prison bars by bleeding fingers. But, powerful though they are as distress signals, it is difficult for the moment to assess their quality as literature.

IF MANY EDUCATED Poles hanker after the few available scholarships which could take them, for a time at least, to the West, it is not surprising. *Letter to Brezhnev* would be unlikely to attract packed houses in Warsaw—even supposing that Poles envy their Russian neighbours for being marginally less deprived than themselves. Yet that such a film could be made, and prove popular, perhaps indicates a new British conjecture, or at least British regional conjecture, that the average individual stands as good a chance of attaining personal fulfilment under Eastern Communism as under British Capitalism.

Such a feeling, where it exists, is easily linked to the fact that throughout the West there has been—along, admittedly, with a growing polarisation of opinion—a steady lowering of political expectations. What difference does it make where you are? Maybe countries deemed to be awful are not so bad after all. In any case the very planet is under threat. Even resurgent anti-Communism in America under Reagan, with its cult of the Rambo strong-arm man, is possibly less endemic than it appears. Stimulated by the threat of nuclear war, by anxieties about environmental pollution, and by the failure of post-War social planning, a mood of fatalism has

⁴ *Poland under Black Light*. By JANUSZ ANDERMAN. Readers International (P.O. Box 954, Columbia, Louisiana 71418, USA). \$12.50, £7.95.

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SUMMER ISSUE, OUT IN MAY: **CHOICE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**. AVAILABLE FROM: UNIT 8, GROVE ASH, BLETCHLEY, MILTON KEYNES MK1 1BZ. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (4 ISSUES): £15 (UK); £19.50 (EUROPE); £22.50 (USA)

emerged for which it would be hard to find a precedent. It is to this mood that Kurt Vonnegut's latest novel *Galapagos*⁵ appeals—and Vonnegut's popularity is nowhere better established than in his native America.

Vonnegut's familiar low opinion of the human species, his shrugging ("so it goes") *contemptus mundi*, gets another airing. *Galapagos* is narrated by brain-damaged Leon Trotsky Trout. Leon is a Viet Nam vet, who later became a ship-worker in Sweden and got decapitated by a sheet of metal. Thereafter his ghost haunts a luxury liner which, following the end of the world in 1986, becomes a latter-day ark bearing a bunch of eccentric survivors as far as the Galapagos Islands—a setting which allows Vonnegut to bring Darwin

into the story at regular intervals and to make ironic play with the sub-title of Darwin's magnum opus: *The Survival of Certain Favoured Species*. Leon tells his story from a million years hence, rambling on about the characters of the ship's crew and revealing how man ultimately mutated into a harmless creature who is half-human and half-fish. The book's refrain, monotonously audible through a cacophonous narrative, is that *homo sapiens* was doomed by his big brain.

Vonnegut ranks low as a philosopher, though his notion of man's intellect as a force for destruction can be expected to elicit widespread assent. To my mind, however, *Galapagos* is a protracted piece of whimsy, laborious and unrewarding—and indeed, if this were the best that Western literature currently had to offer, it might be time to start writing to the Kremlin in earnest.

⁵ *Galapagos*. By KURT VONNEGUT. Jonathan Cape, £9.50.

A Naked People?

Versions of Wales—By NED THOMAS



BOOKS AND TELEVISION series discussing and interpreting Wales have proliferated in the last three years as the sense of the precariousness of the Welsh condition has been aggravated to the point of crisis. Perhaps the very weakness of the material and institutional base

makes for the high intellectual profile of the "condition of Wales" argument as compared, say, with the discussion of Scotland, a kind of compensatory myth-making, the Arthurian legend over again.

Whereas in the 1970s the case for the Welsh language was the main Welsh cause put to England, several of the recent books come from English-speaking Wales, or rather—since that demarcation-line is hard to draw and fraught with problems—claim to speak for the English-speaking Welsh, or for a Wales in which they are given their rightful place. Writers in Wales are mostly too busy these days with the normal and necessary business of writing television plays and soap-operas, so that it often seems as if the mantle of prophet has now passed to writers in English such as the poet R. S. Thomas, or Gwyn A. Williams, who concludes his history of the Welsh, *When Was Wales?*¹ like this:

"One thing I am sure of. Some kind of human society, though God knows what kind, will no doubt go on occu-

pying these two western peninsulas of Britain, but that people, who are my people and no mean people, who have for a millennium and a half lived in them as a Welsh people, are now nothing but a naked people under an acid rain."

This is the conclusion of a chapter which starts off with the overwhelming rejection of the Devolution proposals on St David's Day 1979, and the election of Mrs Thatcher's first Government two months later with a much increased Conservative vote in Wales. The virtual disappearance—or so it then seemed—of a distinctive Welsh politics, whether Nationalist or Welsh Radical, and the rapid de-industrialisation of Wales in the years that followed, has taken away from the Welsh-identifying English-language writers and intellectuals that vital base and confident protesting style which they took for their birthright. This parallels an earlier crisis among Welsh-speaking intellectuals where the existential *angst* arose from a kind of reverse exile, described by the philosopher J. R. Jones as "your country leaving you" through emigration of Welsh-speakers, in-migration of English people, and loss of Welsh around you.

These two groups of intellectuals, often professional colleagues, now find themselves in an uneasy alliance, beyond the linguistic and cultural frictions and rivalries, to keep the very idea of Wales afloat in a territory which more and more conforms to British political norms (see Denis Balsom's essay in *The National Question Again*²). One of the means for doing this, or at least for attempting it, has been the writing of Welsh history, along with television one of our few growth industries. Certainly Welsh people who do not speak Welsh are likely to rely more on history for a sense of identity than those for whom the identity is implied by the language used, and in this sense history might theoretically have the capacity

¹ *When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh*. By GWYN A. WILLIAMS. Black Raven Press, £12.95; Penguin, £3.95.

² *The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980s*. Edited by JOHN OSMOND. Gomer Press, £6.00.

to mobilise the *whole* Welsh nation. In practice, one of the most valuable things which historians such as Gwyn A. Williams and Dai Smith in his *Wales! Wales?*³ have done is to give voice to the social and political experience of the industrial and latterly English-speaking valleys in ways that compete with and criticise some of the existing histories. There may be an ultimate reconciliation, but the immediate effect has not been to mobilise the whole population in the name of an agreed history.

IN ALL KINDS OF WAYS, then, it is possible to relate recent books about Wales to the continuing sense of crisis among Welsh intellectuals—a crisis which in many respects is peculiarly Welsh. But it can also be seen in relation to a much more general crisis in Western rationality, and it is to this I now turn, with two volumes particularly in mind: Gwyn A. Williams's history and Emyr Humphreys's *The Taliesin Tradition*.⁴

The two books are written from rather different standpoints and with different emphases. Emyr Humphreys's tradition is most of the time synonymous with what happens within the Welsh language, though with occasional leaps to include notable Welsh Americans such as Frank Lloyd Wright. His is also, as one might expect from a novelist, a more literary history. But what both have remarkably in common is a sense not only of the precariousness of Wales but of historiography as it used to be known, an immense self-consciousness about the enterprise in which they are engaged.

"All historical writing is an extension of a point of view, which is itself fixed in its own present", says Emyr Humphreys, and again, "the Welsh tradition offers a whole range of alternative heroes who have not lost the gift of shape-shifting inside the confines of the tribal language." The image of shape-shifting, which is taken from Taliesin himself, allows the author to make all kinds of connections between times and people and events. The connections owe nothing to causality as traditionally understood but are found to be true if they explain more than other patterns of connection do.

Gwyn A. Williams prefers the word *history* to Emyr Humphreys's *myth*, but is there that much difference in their sense of what is being forged? "In the Welsh making and remaking of themselves", writes Williams, "a sense of history has been central. The Welsh or their effective movers and shapers have repeatedly employed history to make a usable past, to turn a past into an instrument with which a present can build a future. It was once done in terms of myth, it has been recently and can be done again in terms of history."

It is one thing, however, to observe the use of myth and history in the past by people for whom these things had absolute value, quite another to approach the range of possible histories today not as "objective truths" but as versions

to be willed or chosen. This is a much more general philosophical problem arising from the breakdown of the distinction between perceiving subject and perceived object.

EMYR HUMPHREYS'S CASE is a complicated one. He invokes a tradition, but it is not a single, selective tradition of the kind claimed in the past for most national literatures. It is a tradition of shape-shifting, which some might say is no tradition at all except that it happens within the wider tradition of a given language. It is so multiple and various that it cannot possibly express any set of values if it be not a subconscious drive to survive at all costs. And yet some moral absolutes seem to survive within this relativistic scheme. Whatever the shifts,

"a people cannot lose altogether the capacity to appreciate effort and sacrifice. History accumulates for them evidence through the centuries of dedicated minorities prepared to bend their entire life energies towards the salvation of the nation."

But why? Because they are kept going by myths and versions of history they themselves create to validate that effort, versions that are in turn validated by that devotion and sacrifice. Though the shadow of theological concepts such as providence seems to hang in the background, Emyr Humphreys's book appears to assert that we make our own myths and validate our own lives, and that this will have a wider social resonance if we believe our own stories sufficiently wholeheartedly.

Gwyn A. Williams comes from the Marxist tradition which used to have a short way with the problem of subject and object. A truly objective history would be a working-class perception of history, with all the veils of false consciousness induced by the present class-structure removed. Things no longer seem so easy, and on his penultimate page the historian is assailed by doubt, apparently about the ability of a new history to remake the Welsh nation. And although Gwyn A. Williams uses class analysis as a powerful tool, that linear projection of the class struggle to its ultimate successful and foregone conclusion is no longer there. It is a post-Benjamin Marxism and all the better for that, but just as we are left without a clear sense of objective reality, so we have to do without the old linear causality and the certain hope.

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³ *Wales! Wales?* By DAI SMITH. Allen & Unwin, £9.95.

⁴ *The Taliesin Tradition: A Quest for the Welsh Identity*. By EMYR HUMPHREYS. Black Raven Press, £10.95.

⁵ *The Matter of Wales: Epic Views of a Small Country*. By JAN MORRIS. Oxford University Press, £12.50.

JAN MORRIS'S *The Matter of Wales*⁵ is full of information of all possible kinds (information not easily found elsewhere in many cases) and there are several set-piece descriptions done finely in the English Romantic manner; but it is a book that has annoyed many of its reviewers, chiefly for what they see as its whimsical and arbitrary organisation around the figure of Owain Glyndŵr, who is treated as a mythical figure in the most all-embracing sense. The same reviewers praise Gwyn A. Williams more often than not, and yet perhaps the difference is only one of degree, and of course of style and declared affiliation. Once one abandons the idea of "objective truth" and "linear development" maybe there are only styles to compare and prefer.

The first effect that is felt as new voices and new versions of history are heard is that a balance is being redressed; a countervailing truth will now do justice to neglected lives. (Gwyn A. Williams has been careful to redress the balance of historiography in favour of women too, yet this has not saved him from feminist critics, for women, of course must also be the subjective perceivers of history.) Yet as the voices and versions proliferate, we ask ourselves whether we are listening to the confusing prelude to an eventual truly human history, whether written collectively or by some *Übermensch*, or whether we have now entered upon an endless collective dialogue in which the voices rise and fall, a kind of theatre beyond narrative and beyond description, not unlike the

images and arguments that passed in rapid succession across our screens in the television series *The Dragon has Two Tongues* where Gwyn A. Williams confronted Wynford Vaughan Thomas.

I speak of theatricality not to suggest something more trivial than traditional history, and certainly not in disparagement, but to register a quality of contemporary thought—whether about literature or about history—which displays a consciousness of its own social and subjective sources, of several subjective sources, many possible narratives, and which displays, problematises but cannot resolve.

I have been greatly helped, in thinking about the problems, by discussing with an Italian friend the linked political and intellectual changes that have been taking place since the middle of the 1970s in his country, where the discussion is dominated by philosophical categories rather than by the literary and historical ones that are dominant in Wales. In Italy, the crisis of the Left in respect of linear progress and a known objective reality was compounded by the proliferation of legitimate new voices, for example from the Women's Movement. This all happened as the accompaniment to *il riflusso*, the retreat by many activists from politics into private life. In Wales, it seems to me, the emergence of many and competing versions of history, each self-conscious about its own sources, is doing a great deal to teach us about each other, about the divided nation that we are. But although the emphasis in many of these versions is on a radical or even revolutionary tradition, the total effect at present may not be to mobilise but to problematise.

The Graveyard of the Elephants

for M G

Someplace in Africa
it's said there's a valley strewn with bones,
great ribs, skulls, chunks of vertebrae,
like monuments of pumice-stone
scattered whitely among the thorns.

Old-time hunters
told this tale,
that elephants would shuffle there,
would trumpet one last time
then slowly topple over among their kind.

Those hunter-types are gone,
yet still the legend lingers,
for elephants
are ponderous, likeable, anachronistic beasts,
and where better than Africa
can old idealists go
to lay their creaking structures down?

Chris Zithulele Mann

Books Encountered

Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in the Second World War. By ANTHONY ALDGATE and JEFFREY RICHARDS. Basil Blackwell, £15.

Sensible, nostalgic, informative account of eleven films, revealing how entertainment was subtly harnessed to morale-boosting—even in a George Formby comedy or a biopic like *The Young Mr Pitt*. But surely *Next of Kin* had no definite article?

Richard Rogers: A Biography. By BRYAN APPELYARD. Faber and Faber, £9.95.

Partisan, show-bizzy life and loves of the man part-responsible for the Beaubourg atrocity, which it calls "the most successful modern building in the world", and the piled napkin rings of the new Lloyds, with tell-tale illustrations.

Taking Sides: The Fiction of John le Carré. By TONY BARLEY. Open University Press, £20, paper £5.95.

Omitting *The Naive and Sentimental Lover*, this applies loving scholarship to the implicit ideology of the spy fiction, and finds both repetition and liberal indecision. Fair enough, but why not?

The Myth of Modernism and Twentieth Century Literature. By BERNARD BERGONZI. Harvester Press, £25.

Misleading title for 14 fine essays on Bloomsbury, Bennett, Lawrence, Wyndham Lewis, Pound, Leavis, Eliot, Davie, Larkin, Steiner, Eagleton, and others. A humane, discriminating, deceptively gentle voice.

No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880. By ALLAN M. BRANDT. Oxford University Press, \$19.95, £18.50.

Exhaustively researched account of the response to predominantly pre-AIDS afflictions. As reactions to AIDS show, ideas of punishment for sin persist; but exhortation by film and poster has been even less successful than fallible "miracle cures."

Duff Cooper: The Authorized Biography. By JOHN CHARMLEY. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

Loyal but infidelities-and-all account of the wartime Minister of Information and post-War Ambassador to Paris. Strange that so inoffensive a hedonist should arouse the opposite furies of Waugh and Dalton (see below).

The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street. By NIGEL CROSS. Cambridge University Press, £25.

Based largely on such archives as the Royal Literary Fund's, this puts price-tags on John Gross's men of letters and some others, once famous but now forgotten. The author, a working journalist, reveals his own publisher's advance: £500.

The New Select Committees: A Study of the 1979 Reforms. Edited by GAVIN DREWRY. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £25.

Essays by 15 academics, two House of Commons librarians, and one ex-civil servant. Their conclusion: while the Select Committees' impact is far from Congressional, they could be the thin end of a democratic wedge.

Teachers: First-Hand Views of the Classroom Crisis. By FRANK E. HUGGETT. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £10.95.

Edited pseudonymous taped interviews with practising teachers. The general conclusion is that they're underpaid. Secondary deduction: tape recording can be tendentious if the editor's against private schools and traditional methods.

The Divided Province: The Troubles in Northern Ireland 1969-1985. Edited by KEITH JEFFERY. Orbis Publishing, £9.

With the format and layout of an old-fashioned part-work, this

looks unpromising. In fact, it's an instructive, well-illustrated, unbiased account of Northern Ireland's tragedy. Conor Cruise O'Brien's preface shrewdly questions the final cheer-up sentence about "bridging divides."

Beloved Quixote: The Unknown Life of John Middleton Murry. By KATHERINE MIDDLETON MURRY. Souvenir Press, £14.95.

After Katherine Mansfield's death, Murry married her near-double, who also died of TB. The author is their daughter. In soft-impressionist prose, she describes the terrors of Murry's third marriage, to a violent termagant, and the tragedies that followed. Was his work worth all that waste?

The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940-45. Edited by BEN PIMLOTT. Jonathan Cape, £40.

Scrupulously edited companion-piece to the author's monumental biography, a quarry for historians and connoisseurs of dis-obliging gossip. Dalton still seems unappealing; but his energy is astonishing—as is Ben Pimlott's.

Eighteenth Century Encounters: Studies in Literature and Society in the Age of Walpole. By PAT ROGERS. Harvester Press, £22.50.

Ten scholarly essays by the Professor of English at Bristol, free from his occasional jargon. Most revealing: "Gulliver's Glasses." Most satisfying: a courteous disagreement with E. P. Thompson, whose case here (on Pope) "is built on supposition, guesswork, and the neglect of contrary evidence."

The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot and Early Twentieth Century Thought. By SANFORD SCHWARTZ. Princeton University Press, £18.

An original essay linking *il miglior fabbro* and his disciple to Bergson, Nietzsche, and others, partly via Eliot's doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley, and relating it all to the New Critics and the post-structuralists.

The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature and the Arts. By ROGER SHATTUCK. Faber and Faber, £15.

Wonderfully sane iconoclastic essays by America's foremost Proustian, now Commonwealth Professor of French at the University of Virginia. *Inter alia*, he casts an amused and deadly glance at later perversions of modernism, including officially sponsored "experiments" like Christo's "Running Fence", and criticism's attempted coup against imaginative literature.

Journal of a Vietcong. By TRUONG NHU TANG. Jonathan Cape, £10.95.

Not your typical VC from the jungle, but an agitator, double agent, and later Cabinet Minister, from a wealthy middle-class Vietnamese family. His "consciousness was raised" at an exclusive Saigon *lycée* where French officials' children patronised even privileged Vietnamese. The Party line is boring, but the patriotism real.

Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition. By STANSFIELD TURNER. Sidgwick & Jackson, £12.95.

Well-polished, surprisingly frank account of Washington infighting by the Company's former Director, put in by Carter to curb excesses. He has suggestions about Britain too, but shows less knowledge here.

Max Beerbohm, or the Dandy Dante: Rereading with Mirrors. By ROBERT VISCUSI. Johns Hopkins University Press, £20.35.

Elegant, Max-like defence of a hopeless thesis: that Beerbohm's miniatures, including *The Happy Hypocrite*, bear serious comparison with the *Commedia*. One Americanism—"doll house" for "dolls' house"—spoils the pastiche.

R.M.

EDUCATION

Unresolved Questions

Reflections after the Honeyford Case—By MAX BELOFF



tional history.¹

The troubles that ended the career of a gifted and dedicated teacher, against whose professional competence no complaints were at any stage suggested, were provoked by his expression of opinions about the issues created at his school (among many others) by the presence of an overwhelming majority of pupils whose family backgrounds were those of the ethnic minorities (in this case Pakistani Muslims) and by his rejection not of the parents' demands for recognition of their religious susceptibilities, whether in diet or female dress, but of the fashionable "multicultural" approach to the problem adopted by the Bradford City Council, his employers. The expression of such self-evident matters of concern as the effect upon his pupils' command of spoken English of the existence side-by-side of a number of other "maternal" languages—or on the academic prospects of his Asian pupils by their parents' habit of withdrawing them for

THE ACCEPTANCE by Mr Ray Honeyford, a Bradford headmaster, of early retirement and a financial settlement to go with it (announced on 15 December 1985) marked the end of the most disgraceful episode in recent British educa-

periods in term-time to visit their families overseas—was sufficient to make him an appropriate target for accusations of "racism." He became the object of a successful vendetta on the part not of the ethnic minorities as such but of Left-wing political activists, themselves mainly white, who exploited the sensitivities of the ethnic minorities to bring about conditions which neither Mr Honeyford, nor his wife, nor his staff could in the long run be expected to accept.

It is an appalling thought that it was possible, is possible, in this country, to arrange for a school to be besieged by truanting pupils, chanting obscenities, and encouraged in this behaviour by their parents and by elected representatives of the people.² A police presence prevented actual physical violence against Mr Honeyford, the staff, and those pupils who went in for their lessons. But that in England in 1985 it should take a police presence to keep open a perfectly ordinary State school was a portent which has perhaps been taken too lightly. Hatreds of this kind once aroused can go far, and can even lead, as we know, to concentration camps and gas-chambers.

IT WOULD BE COMFORTING to think that the case was unique, that Bradford is unique; but we already know that this is not the case where local authorities are concerned. Avon Council has taken action against a Bristol teacher, Jonathan Savery, who committed the same crime as Mr Honeyford by writing, in that idiosyncratic journal *The Salisbury Review*, in criticism of the excesses that flow from the doctrine of "anti-racism" and by defending Mr Honeyford's right to speak his mind.³ In Mr Savery's case the call for dismissal seems to have come from a group of non-white teachers at the Bristol Multicultural Education Centre, who wish to see a category of posts reserved for black teachers.

There is also the case of the Principal of Waltham Forest College, who complained in a letter to *The Times* that West Indian youths had stolen things from the school and held lecturers and students to ransom at knife-point, and who was threatened by his local authority with disciplinary action for views "contrary to those of the council."⁴ Since one must presume that not even the dottiest local education authority is *in favour* of criminal activities of this kind, the issue was whether belonging to an ethnic minority is something that should never be mentioned in the case of individuals whose behaviour is being stigmatised.

¹ A preliminary account, written before Mr Honeyford's abandonment of the hopeless struggle, will be found in Andrew Brown, *Trials of Honeyford: Problems in Multicultural Education* (Centre for Policy Studies, 1985).

The pamphlet is very useful on the factual side, and for the picture it gives of the unreasoning passion of some of Mr Honeyford's persecutors. But it does not attempt to explore the political background to the case (difficult since the pamphlet was published while Mr Honeyford was still pursuing his case in the courts); and it is too much concerned with the author's own views on the issues involved. It is clear that he did not find Mr Honeyford much to his taste—the Dragon School, Marlborough, and Bedales are not perhaps the best background for understanding a man from a poor working-class background who has managed through sheer hard work to attain a respectable professional position. Anyhow, quite a lot of people found Captain Dreyfus far from *sympathique*.

² Mr Honeyford's account of his experiences was given in three articles in the *Daily Mail* (17-19 December 1985).

³ See the *Daily Mail*, 26 November and 4 December 1985, and the article by Ronald Butt, "An Erosion of Freedom", *The Times*, 13 March 1986.

⁴ See John Izbicki, "The Year of the Jackboot", *Daily Telegraph*, 6 January 1986.

And that brings one away from the question of multi-cultural education to the wider issue of the extent to which race relations are held to be improved by limitations upon the freedom of speech where members of the host community are concerned. In this sense it is, of course, comparable with the failure of the recent Swann inquiry to do research on the family circumstances of different groups of children, since such an enquiry might reflect disadvantageously on some ethnic groups, and could not be reconciled with the presumption that the failures of children from these groups must be wholly the result of being taught by "racists" in a "racist" society.⁵

Although the ramifications of the Honeyford case can lead (on the one hand) to a consideration of the general question of freedom of speech in a plural society—and *that* parts of England have certainly become—and (on the other) to even more general questions of race relations in such a society, the purely educational issues that have been raised are themselves worthy of attention, and indeed demand some clarification.

⁵ *Education for All: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups* (The Swann Report). Cmnd. 9454. 1985. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, £24.00. See, on this point, the article by Dennis J. O'Keeffe, "Swann Song of Prejudice", *ENCOUNTER*, December 1985.

⁶ The evidence is set out by Mr O'Keeffe in the *ENCOUNTER* article already cited. See also the pamphlet by Professor Antony Flew, *Education, Race and Revolution* (Centre for Policy Studies, 1984).

⁷ It is perhaps no more than a coincidence that Bradford is the main centre for "Peace Studies" at the university level. The Department's bias is perhaps less frightening than the low intellectual level of the demands made upon its students. On "Peace Studies" more generally, see Caroline Cox and Roger Scruton, *Peace Studies: A Critical Survey* (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1984).

⁸ On "World Studies", see Roger Scruton, *World Studies: Education or Indoctrination?* (Institute for European Defence & Strategic Studies, 1985). One of Mr Honeyford's persecutors was a West Indian lecturer at Bradford University who believes that traditional geography texts give children an unfavourable attitude to other peoples. See Andrew Brown, *Trials of Honeyford*, pp. 17-19.

⁹ It is ironic that Mr Peter Newsam, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality (which was unhelpful with Bradford's problems), came to that post from that of Education Officer of the Inner London Education Authority, where he was a willing instrument of London's educational decline and particularly savage in his attacks upon the *Black Papers* which first called attention (in the 1960s) to the national decline in educational standards.

¹⁰ See my article, "Education: The Enemy Within", *Daily Telegraph* (27 November 1985), and Mr Fred Jarvis's reply (3 December 1985). It is tempting to express astonishment that a traditionally respected section of the community such as school-teachers should allow themselves to be led by an ideologue with no genuine links with the profession and its performance. But one should not do so, since university staff, an even more respected body of men and women, have taken on a female counterpart of Mr Fred Jarvis, Ms Diana Warwick, with the result that in January 1986 British universities witnessed their first strike of academics.

¹¹ *Education for All*, pp. 508-512. Co-education is unfavourable to the prospects of girls who are career-motivated, whatever their backgrounds.

OF COURSE, AS IT IS EASY to demonstrate, there is a close connection between what is advocated as appropriate in matters such as the actual curriculum of the schools and the political views of the advocates. One looks for one set of attitudes if what is desired is the preservation of the norms of an existing society and the painless adaptation of incomers to such a society, and for quite another if what one is aiming at is revolutionary change.⁶ "Peace Studies" is not just a way of looking at international relationships in general, but implies a particular bias in respect of the current tensions between the Soviet bloc and Western-style democracies.⁷ Similarly, the replacement of the traditional subjects of geography and history by "World Studies" is coloured by a wish to give a particular view of the contemporary world in which the values of Western societies are questioned from the point of view of other cultures.⁸

Even if we limit ourselves to the actual prescriptions of the advocates of multicultural education and their critics, we have to remember that this debate does not take place in a vacuum but at a time when pupils in state schools in many areas have suffered a steady fall in standards owing to the ravages of so-called progressive education, and the belittling of formal academic accomplishment and of any form of differentiation between academically gifted and less able pupils. London's children would have suffered under Frances Morrell's ILEA régime even if all of them had been pure, white, native English. The problem has merely been made more difficult when many of them are not, and have linguistic difficulties in addition to all the others.⁹ Of course, the disruption caused by a year's "industrial action" on the part of teachers—again pushed into this by politically motivated union leaders (also a factor in Mr Honeyford's problems)—has not helped.¹⁰ And as the Swann Report points out, the decline in the general provision for single-sex education in recent years has stimulated the demand for separate Muslim schools.¹¹

THE SITUATION in contemporary Britain in respect of the emergence of a plural society is not unique. Indeed, the presence side-by-side of different communities within a single State is—taking the world at large, and with a perspective of centuries—a much more common phenomenon than its opposite: the coincidence of State boundaries with communities united by a common language and culture. Migration—voluntary or forced—has been and remains a constant aspect of human affairs. While, therefore, a great variety of plural societies exist or have existed, together with an even greater number of potential solutions to the problems they represent, it is possible to see certain familiar situations presenting themselves in respect of educational policy where such policy is, in the last resort, the prerogative of the political sovereign.

If we accept as a broad frame of reference the familiar definition of plural societies—that is, those societies whose members cannot without violating their religious and cultural norms worship together, dine together, or intermarry, and where minorities will also in most cases speak a different mother-tongue from the majority, and use that or yet another

language for purposes of worship—one can see that to provide an educational system suitable for such a society can never be easy.¹²

If a situation is created with such speed as it has been in post-War Britain, it may well find the host community unprepared or wrongly prepared, in that its previous experience has been with immigrants both willing and able to be assimilated with only minimal adaptation into the culture they find on arrival.¹³ For a once imperial nation like the British, the differentiation between those who wish to remain members of identifiable groups and those whose wish is equality of treatment and full assimilation may be particularly hard. Not merely did they formerly hold a belief in the superiority of their own language and culture, but also found the upwardly mobile elements in the societies they governed anxious to learn English and to immerse themselves in much of their rulers' cultural heritage.

And this is true of other imperial nations. The French saw nothing incongruous when children in their African colonies used history textbooks beginning: "*Nos ancêtres les Gauls*", or in treating aptitude in literary French as the medium of social promotion in the colonies as in the metropolis. What faith in a culture (including its language) may do may of course be offered by a ruling ideology and a ruling party. Assimilation through the Russian language and the Communist Party into the ruling class is the principal avenue to power and influence in the non-Russian Republics of the Soviet Union. How far this is still held at bay by Islamic influences, and how far in consequence there is a *de facto* "plural society" in parts of the country, is disputed among observers of the Soviet scene.¹⁴

¹² Differences in colour, while they may assist recognition of group differences, are not an essential element in the make-up of a plural society. The use of "black", as in "Black Studies" or "Black Sections" (in the Labour Party), has no object other than to obliterate real differences between ethnic communities, in the interest of political leaders who hope to make their careers on the basis of stirring up anti-white prejudice. It has no more scientific validity than Hitler's use of "Aryan."

¹³ The original Australian instinct to demand the "total assimilation" of its first main groups of non-British immigrants has been modified. See Andrew Markus and M. C. Ricklefs (eds), *Surrender Australia?* (George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985).

¹⁴ The Czarist Empire provided in the now-destroyed civilisation of the Jewish Pale a classic example of a plural society. The Jews, speaking Yiddish and studying Hebrew, were wholly set apart—except for restricted economic activity—from the peasant masses, White Russians, the Ukrainian or Polish speakers, and the upper classes, Polish or Russian. To leave the ghetto and aspire to a full secular life, Russian or Polish had to be acquired, and to reach out into Europe's scientific culture, German, French and English as well. See Chs 1 and 2 of *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader*. By JEHUDA REINHARZ. Oxford University Press, £25.00.

¹⁵ The great Erasmian scholar P. S. Allen (then President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford) could not understand why someone like myself, from an orthodox Jewish background, found it hard to take part in chapel services while a Unitarian like C. P. Scott (later Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*) did not.

¹⁶ As a rather poor classicist, I can remember the difficulty of learning Hebrew alongside the Latin and Greek which were still considered a necessary part of a liberal education; and my Hebrew teachers were much less demanding than what is reported of Muslim Koran classes.

THE RECOGNITION of the problem does not lead to an agreement as to its solution in practice. There are several, possibly conflicting, interests.

There is the individual interest of the particular child, which in the case of the offspring of the ethnic minorities may not be seen in the same way by the child, his or her teachers, and the parents. The child may value above all early fluency in the majority tongue—first to enlarge the boundaries of social intercourse, and later to give it better opportunities in the labour market. Most teachers—and quite a lot of parents—will take the same view. And when this is the case (as with many of the East African Asians), school performance may excel that of the native English.

Again, there are the individual interests of the native English children for whom Ray Honeyford's solicitude was seen as an offence. It is not really so odd to believe that a class in which many children (or even the majority) find it difficult to keep up with the work because of linguistic disabilities is likely to progress more slowly than a more homogeneous one. The situation is made even more difficult when one is dealing with a plethora of mother-tongues and not merely with a single alternative (as in the case of the Hispanics in Texas and elsewhere in the south-western United States).

The parents from the ethnic minorities may, however, not give the same priority to assimilation as their children. No doubt they hope to improve their employment prospects, at least where boys are concerned—but in some cases their priority will be to maintain the cohesion of their own particular community and its ties with their country of origin. For them the common life of school presents a temptation to cast aside their traditional religious allegiance, and with it the social patterns that it dictates. This is, of course, even more evident where religion (as with Judaism and resurgent Islam) is not merely a set of theological beliefs but an all-embracing pattern of life very different from the diluted Christianity or even secularism of most State schools.¹⁵

It has, of course, been accepted that religion may be an adequate reason for providing separate schools in Britain. The State-maintained system includes Roman Catholic and Jewish as well as Anglican schools. But for most Jewish children, as for Muslim, Hindu and Sikh children, their requirements in respect of religious education and the languages that it demands of them must be met outside school hours. This can be a serious impediment to their progress in secular studies; and it can prevent them from entering fully into the out-of-hours activities of their classmates. Children, like adults, have only so much time and so much energy.¹⁶

While admitting the validity of the Muslim community's wish to preserve and even strengthen its identity, the Swann Committee nevertheless recommended denying the Muslim claim to separate schools. They did this on the ground that what was intended was further to limit the range of activities open to Muslim girls—and to give them a different education from that of boys, directed towards their future roles not as breadwinners but as Muslim wives and mothers. What the Committee were here doing was to assert the view that the interests of the children (as they defined them) should take priority over the views of their parents; and that concessions over such matters as diet and dress and physical education

should allay any reasonable fears on the part of their families.¹⁷ That, after all, was Ray Honeyford's view.

YET THERE IS ANOTHER interest involved apart from those of pupils, parents, teachers, and ethnic groups. It is not just a question of group rights as against the rights of individuals, which has been so major a source of controversy in the international community. There is also the interest of the British State and community as a whole. For unless Britain prospers the outlook for everyone—and most of all for the minorities—is bleak indeed. It is this aspect of the Swann prescriptions on multicultural education that has clearly upset Mr Dennis O'Keeffe, and it is where I also find the Swann argument hardest to follow.

The Report's contention would appear to be that "multicultural education" should not only be a way of providing for better relations within schools that have a high percentage of pupils from the ethnic minorities (with greater attention to their parents), but is something which should permeate the entire educational scene. When we speak of "Britain", we must now think of it as giving a permanent and legitimate place to all the components of its plural society but not to any recognisable degree emphasising its English component. For to do this would be to cause a certain sense of inferiority in the children of the ethnic minorities which it is essential to remove if their under-achievement is to be corrected. They are not descended from the Anglo-Saxons (any more than the Senegalese from the Gauls), so away with the Witan and Alfred and the Cakes; and thus through the centuries. Instead let all parts of the Great Globe and their histories be treated on an equal footing.

There are two reasons for treating this prescription as

¹⁷ *Education for All*, pp. 503-512. My own inclination is to think that the Swann Committee were wrong. Provided arrangements for teaching English and basic mathematics are adequate so that Muslim girls and women can cope with the wider society if and when they need to, I cannot see why we should deny to Muslim parents what we offer Roman Catholics and Jews. Whether those taught in such schools accept their teachings or rebel is, obviously, another question. At least the responsibility would be where it properly belongs—and the Honeyford case would not be repeated.

¹⁸ I would say the same of literature, including our very rich literature for children—now displaced, as Mr Honeyford points out, by comics for the barely literate.

The case is equally strong for major authors whose influence has been world-wide, however local their provenance. Mr Honeyford's antagonist, Dr Foster Carter, holds the view that because Shakespeare represented the biases of his time, he is therefore unsuitable for schools in "20th-century multi-racial Britain" (Andrew Brown, *Trials of Honeyford*, pp. 18-19). Jews have had to live with Shylock for a long time now; I expect the Moors will survive Othello.

¹⁹ *Education For All*, p. 409.

nonsense. In the first place, it is hard enough to grasp the history of any one country, even if it deals with a landscape and artefacts close at hand. (Even Ranke did not begin to write the *Weltgeschichte* until he was in his eighties!) Let us not implant a further element of confusion in young minds. But the other reason is, for me, even more convincing. It is just not true that British (or indeed European) history is irrelevant to the countries of origin of the minorities. How can one understand Gandhi or Nehru without reference to English law and British political thought?¹⁸

If we come to the question of language, which is so crucial to all discussions of the curriculum, it is reasonable enough to make provision for maintaining and developing mother tongues. No one is the worse for being bilingual, difficult though that talent is to acquire and maintain. But to suggest at a time of straitened resources that secondary education should put even the rich languages of the Indian sub-continent on a par with French and German for all secondary children, merely as a gesture to the ethnic minorities, seems to me quite extraordinary.¹⁹ I am more ready to believe than was Macaulay that these are the keys to great literatures and great systems of thought. But, apart from the tiny minority who may wish to make these languages their life study, to what extent would they ever be used?

One great weakness of British education, as compared with that of its neighbours, is in modern European languages. Not only are they taught ineffectively and to too few, but their very acquisition seems to be regarded by many children as an imposition. At a time when our fortunes increasingly depend upon our ability to do business and cooperate in Europe, the languages of that continent are surely more important here and now than any others. Even those whose business or other careers take them to the Commonwealth will find English already the *lingua franca* of those with whom they are likely to wish to deal. If we want to assist the careers of children of the ethnic minorities, it is better that they should learn French or German (or Spanish or Russian, for that matter) than that English children should learn Urdu or Punjabi out of feelings of multicultural respect.

THE QUESTION OF "multicultural education" involves a variety of perfectly legitimate interests and outlooks. To some extent there can be no definitive answer to the problems raised, because both circumstances and opinions are fluid. That the protagonists should be passionate is not surprising; education is an important matter. What goes wrong, as the Ray Honeyford case so amply illustrates, is that motives and sentiments which have nothing to do with education but derive from other sources of personal or political frustration come in to muddy the waters, to deny the utility of finding the facts or the superiority of reasoned argument to the mouthing of slogans.

MEMOIR

Remembering Paul Dirac

By Esther & Myer Salaman



I REMEMBER the first time I saw Dirac. It was in 1927, at a colloquium at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge. Lady Rutherford had a table underneath a window: there was a large teapot, there were mugs: she was pouring out. Rutherford came up. "You come for your second cup when most people haven't had their first", she said. The door in the wall opposite opened, and a youngish man, not an undergraduate, came in. Rutherford left his mug, and I watched him move between the rows of benches towards the newcomer; he pointed to a seat in the front row.

"Paul Dirac", someone whispered. Soon Fowler came in, made his way to the front row, and sat next to Dirac. Ralph Fowler I had met: his wife was Rutherford's daughter. She had been at school at Bedales, and so had my husband Myer and his brothers and sisters.

The Rutherfords gave an evening party, and my husband and I went. It was very crowded. Next day we ran into Dirac, and I asked him how he had liked the Rutherfords' party.

"I have nothing to compare it with. I've never been to a party."

My third memory of Paul was when he came to lunch with us. We had found rooms in Belvoir Road, off the Chesterton Road. We had three rooms, one of which the landlady had let us furnish, and we had brought in Myer's bed and chair from

ESTHER POLIANOWSKY SALAMAN was a pupil of Einstein in Berlin from 1922-25. Since 1925 she has lived and worked in England. Her books include "Poems from the Russian", translated jointly with Frances Cornford (Faber, 1944); "The Fertile Plain" (Hogarth Press, 1956; Abelard-Schuman, 1957); a study of involuntary memory, "A Collection of Moments" (Longman, 1970); and "The Great Confession" (Allen Lane, 1973). She has also completed a fictionalised autobiographical novel, a trilogy covering the years 1925-1941.

MYER SALAMAN, Research Pathologist at the Royal College of Surgeons from 1968 until his retirement in 1974, was Director of the Department of Cancer Research at the London Hospital Medical School from 1948-67. His papers on virus diseases and on cancer have appeared in many scientific and medical journals.

his College rooms. The landlady cooked us lunch. Dirac sat opposite us, eating roast beef (very tough) and Yorkshire pudding. At that time people had begun to talk about Werner Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle." Paul said Fowler had shown him Heisenberg's paper as soon as it appeared. At first, he told us, he too could make nothing of it, but when he understood it he began at once to explore the consequences, which he published soon afterwards. Dirac explained that the uncertainty principle meant you could tell where a particle was but not its velocity, or you could tell its velocity but not where it was. I couldn't quite understand.

Myer said, "But no one could understand the wave-particle relationship at first. Do you remember that colloquium at the *Reichsanstalt*? I took you to the door. It must have been in 1925."

"Yes, I remember. A paper was given about waves and particles."

These colloquia were always crowded with scientists. The students were free to come, but not to ask questions or criticise; they had their own seminars, which Albert Einstein and Max von Laue attended. People were puzzled, I told Paul; but I remembered Einstein summing up. He said, "We see again, from this very good piece of work, that an electron behaves now as a particle, now as a wave."

Paul looked pleased: his smile came back to me only years later.

When I told someone at the lab that Dirac had come to lunch, and what he had told us, he asked, surprised, "Did he talk so much?"

"He talked neither too much nor too little. What he did not do was make conversation."

A little later I heard that Fowler had told a Senior Fellow of St John's (Dirac's college), on the day of their annual meeting to elect the new Fellows: "If you don't give Dirac a fellowship tonight, Trinity will give him one tomorrow." Dirac got his fellowship at St John's.

We took him to my father-in-law's house in the country, at a village called Barley, near Royston. Paul was his usual self. I remember telling him that Myer would be moving to London to begin his clinical training; he had started some research and was in doubt whether to finish his medical course. He consulted his supervisor, who told him that he had faced the same decision after his Tripos: "I knew I wanted to do research, but I've never regretted my three years at the hospital; it was like going round the world." Myer liked that: he decided to take medicine.

Meanwhile, Rutherford had introduced me to a Miss Mackenzie, just appointed as lecturer in physics at Newnham. Before this I had been working by myself, on a problem about beta rays that Chadwick (Sir James Chadwick, who worked with Rutherford at the Cavendish) had set me. Now Rutherford suggested that I should work with her on the ranges of penetration of alpha particles in air: "We need much more accurate measurements." To cheer us up, he added, "I don't expect you to work with the old gold-leaf electroscope. You're going to have a new machine. And don't forget it cost £100."

Myer had to start his hospital training in London; I had to stay on in Cambridge to the end of my third year. I was lucky:

my new friends the Cornfords had told me I could live with them. Frances Cornford had a wonderful gift of conversation, but her husband Francis was as sparing of words as Paul Dirac. Frances told me that Charles Darwin, her cousin, had come to tea one day when she wasn't well, and Francis had told him she wouldn't be down to tea. They had their tea together, and neither said a word. After tea there was still dead silence; they had nothing to say to one another. Charles left the house. He told his sister, Gwen Raverat, he would never enter it again.

I saw Dirac now and then. I stayed on at the Cavendish until the end of the summer term of 1928, then joined Myer in London, and had my first daughter in the autumn. We saw less of Dirac. He was travelling a great deal to Copenhagen, Russia, America. In Princeton, in 1934, he met Manci, the sister of Eugene Wigner (her first marriage had ended: she had a boy and a girl), and they were married in 1937. They settled in Cambridge in a large house with a large garden. In 1932 he had been appointed Lucasian Professor of Mathematics—the chair that Sir Isaac Newton had held.

We returned to Cambridge in 1940, and shared the Cornfords' house till the end of the War. When Myer joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1943, the children and I stayed on with the Cornfords. I remember standing with Dirac and our David (aged five) in their garden. Paul said to me, "Now that the War is nearly won and David is old enough to start school, have you made plans to go back to physics?"

"I told you I was never a real physicist, that I only stuck to it because I had no language."

"You have written *Two Silver Roubles* [an autobiographical novel, published in 1932] and you're working on another book."

"With Myer's help. If I were a mathematician or a philosopher I wouldn't worry about my language, but to write fiction I need one."

WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER, Myer got a job at the London Hospital, became Director of the Cancer Research Department, and we moved to London. Paul and Manci stayed with us now and then, and we with them in Cambridge.

Manci was a very good wife to Paul. It came to me that she was naturally considerate of him. Sometimes, though, she was frankly critical, in his presence, of his behaviour to another person, and if I remember rightly I agreed with her.

I have always remembered something she told me soon after they had moved into their Cambridge house. Some new friends—an eminent virologist and his French wife—asked them to tea. Manci told Paul and he said he would like to go, but when the time came and she went to fetch him, he said he hadn't finished thinking. She went without him; she gave some excuse, but her hostess was obviously offended. A grand tea had been prepared and there were other guests. In the formal atmosphere of that time, it was very embarrassing for Manci.

Myer and I met distinguished physicists in that house:

Mott, Erwin Schrödinger, A. H. Compton and others, but I have no memories of their talk. I do remember Lisa Meitner telling me about her escape from Nazi Germany. She was warned that no scientist would be allowed to leave after a certain hour that day; so she packed a small bag and left. Otto Hahn, with whom she had made the discovery of the neutron chain-reaction which led eventually to the atom bomb, stayed on (he had no Jewish forebears). Lisa Meitner was now a little, frail, elderly lady, very modest and simple. I had seen her before: Einstein took me to hear her inaugural address to the Berlin Academy of Science in the Summer term of 1925. I never came across another woman Academician.

THIS IS A THANK-YOU LETTER FROM PAUL AFTER ONE OF HIS VISITS TO US.

Cambridge
10 January 1953

Dear Esther,

I would like to thank you very much for your kind hospitality during my stay in London. I was very glad to meet you and your family again, after a rather long interval. The children I could remember only as playing about on the beach, and now they have developed into personalities, with great intellectual and artistic gifts. You must be proud of them.

I was specially glad for the talks I had with you on physics and with your husband on his field of work. I often read semi-popular articles on fundamental biological subjects in *Nature*, *Endeavour* and such magazines, and continually run into questions which I would like to know the answer to, but there is usually no one to ask. With talking to your husband I was able to put some of these questions, and get answers—or learn the difficulty of obtaining an answer—which is a great help to forming a clear picture of the subject. I hope we shall have similar talks in the future. . . .

THIS IS MYER'S ACCOUNT OF A SHORT WALKING TOUR WITH PAUL.

"Some time in 1957—I believe it was Spring—Paul Dirac and I spent four days walking in the Breckland of Norfolk. I had walked the Cambridgeshire footpaths with him, and knew that he was an easy companion—if one didn't mind long silences—and that our comfortable walking pace and mileage were much the same. We both liked getting off the roads, preferred simple lodgings, and were rather parsimonious; so there were no disputes about trivialities.

It surprises me how little I remember of those four days: a room in a lodging-house, a vista down a long green ride, hardly a word of talk. One clear memory I have, and that concerns a question I asked Dirac—something that had been worrying me in my own work on the causes of skin cancer. I wanted to test the hypothesis that ionising radiation applied to a mouse's skin after a small dose of a carcinogenic chemical would produce tumours, although neither application was strong enough to do so by itself. One way to do it was to use radiation which would penetrate only a few millimetres

through the skin, and would not reach the mouse's vital organs. Beta rays had been used for this, but their activity declines rapidly with distance. It was difficult to deliver a uniform dose to a rounded target like a mouse. How could it be done?

He answered almost at once: if I could spread my beta-ray source over a large flat surface—almost infinitely large compared to a mouse—then the dose to different parts of the mouse's surface would not vary with their distance from the source. It was easy to see that the dose *might* turn out to be invariant with distance, but how did Paul know in a flash that it was *exactly* so? And how strange, I thought, that a man should go straight to the geometry of an ideal, probably unrealisable, case, ignoring all the obvious practical snags that loomed so large for me!

In the event the difficulties of applying Paul's suggestion were too great. I took the easy way out: penetrating radiation (X-rays) applied to a fold of skin (the skin of a mouse is loose, like a puppy's) with the rest of the body shielded by lead. My

mice showed no ill effects, but they did not get skin tumours either. That is what a biologist calls a failure: the hypothesis was neither corroborated nor refuted. I may simply have got the conditions wrong.

But Dirac's *ideal* solution remained immaculately valid. Experimental tests could not touch it. Happy mathematicians!"

I REMEMBER another reply of Paul's which had the same combination of unexpectedness and rationality without regard to practical difficulties. He visited India, and was received by Pandit Nehru. Nehru asked him what measures he would like to see adopted by the new state. (Manci tells me Nehru asked a number of visiting scientists for their views at that time.) Paul answered: "A common language, preferably English. Peace with Pakistan. The Metric System." The Metric System was adopted.

Man of Three Phrases

PROFESSOR Paul Adrien Maurice Dirac, OM, FRS, who won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1933, died on October 20 1984 in Florida, United States, at the age of 82. He was Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge from 1932 to 1969.

THE TIMES

PAUL DIRAC, the Nobel prize-winning English physicist, was after Einstein the greatest name in 20th-century physics. After his development of the mathematics of quantum mechanical theory—in effect, the physics of the smallest parts of the atom—and his prediction of anti-matter, one of his peers called him the most remarkable scientific mind since Isaac Newton.

His students remember him as a sometimes disconcerting man. When people asked him how he got his startling ideas about the nature of sub-atomic matter he would patiently explain that he did so by lying on his study floor with his feet up so that the blood ran to his head. A newspaper-man asked him if he could explain for the readers of a popular journal how he arrived at the idea of anti-matter. He thought for a moment and simply said, "No." One of his lecture habits was to lean over the lectern, hold up a piece of chalk, and startle undergraduates by saying: "If this piece of chalk had zero angular momentum it would be spherical."

No one knew what Dirac might think or say next. He attacked only the most difficult scientific problems, and did not publish very many papers. He believed that some great new idea was needed to carry theoretical physics into the future beyond conventional relativity and quantum mechanics.

J. G. Crowther
in THE GUARDIAN

PAUL DIRAC was not exactly a loquacious person. A correspondent once flew down to New Orleans in high spirits after Dirac, who was being honoured at a symposium there, promised him a long interview.

When the reporter arrived Dirac said he didn't know whether he wanted to give an interview or not. He pre-

varicated for two whole days. He looked at the questions and did not like them. "Why don't you interview my research assistant?" he said.

In the end the reporter snatched odd moments while Dirac was doing something else, such as walking to the cafeteria or taking a coffee break. The total number of Dirac's words which actually saw the light of print was 25, nine of which were, "I don't know anything about the philosophy of science."

The correspondent thought Dirac regarded him as a personal enemy, but he was told by one of the great physicist's colleagues, "I've never seen him so talkative." The research assistant, Leopold Halperin, comforted the man by telling him, "Dirac has only three phrases: 'Yes', 'No', and 'I don't know'."

There was another side to Dirac, however. In the summer of 1982, at a party in Jacksonville, a guest who knew nothing about physics but a great deal about cricket found himself sitting next to an elderly man in a floppy hat who talked cricket knowledgeably and volubly all afternoon—the great and taciturn Paul Dirac.

LONDON STANDARD

D R. P. GODDARD and Professor J. C. Taylor write: "Your obituary of P. A. M. Dirac justly stressed his outstanding contribution to quantum theory in the years 1925 to 1933. But perhaps the very emphasis on this work tends, by comparison, to make one lose sight of the extraordinary perfection of nearly all his writings.

His later work on such topics as the theory of magnetic monopoles, the dynamics of constrained systems, extended models of elementary particles, and steps towards a quantum theory of gravity did not have the same immediate impact as his great contributions to the development of quantum theory.

But, as time goes by, physicists have come more and more to appreciate the importance of the later work. An example of this is the great interest in the last ten years in the possible existence of magnetic monopoles. Dirac's 50-year-old work on this subject relates closely to the most recent ideas on unified theories of the fundamental forces of nature."

THE TIMES

PAUL BEGAN TO BE interested in my work. My second novel, *The Fertile Plain*, had come out in 1956.

6 January 1958

It was very kind of you to have me stay with you. I was particularly glad to have those talks with you, in which you showed me some of the problems that a writer of fiction has to face, and the great knowledge of human nature required. I am keen to see what you will write about the life of Cambridge.

With best wishes and hoping to see Myer in a couple of days and you soon after.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Dirac

WHEN PAUL RETIRED from the Lucasian Professorship in 1969, the Diracs left Cambridge. Paul felt he should have been given a definite post-retirement job in this country, but that sort of thing was not so freely available as in the USA. After some time at Princeton and other American universities he was given a Professorship at Tallahassee, Florida, and the Diracs made their home there. We saw them whenever they came to England during the following years. In 1973 Paul was awarded the Order of Merit by the Queen. He wrote asking us to put them up for the investiture, but we were in Italy (and there was a postal strike). When we got home to London, the Diracs were already at the Cumberland Hotel, near us. He visited us next day, and from then on came every morning while Manci visited other friends.

We went into my study; Myer was working downstairs. Dirac said to me, "I remember you in the Cavendish Library when you first came: you looked nice. Have you any photographs of that time?"

"Yes, I have, I'll fetch them." I returned with two: one a passport photograph, the other taken in Berlin, in 1922, in my Russian dress with a high collar buttoned at the side.

"No, that's not what I remember."

"I remember you were disappointed when you heard, after the War, that I had no intention of returning to physics."

"I was, but now I'm interested in what you write on memories. I was glad when I was given your book *A Collection of Moments*, but I haven't read your second book, about writers. But I read *War and Peace*, as you advised me a long time ago. It took me two years."

"I'm hungry. Are you ready for lunch? Do you mind if we have it in the kitchen? My 'daily' had to leave early."

"I should like that: I often wished I could have mine in the kitchen when I was a boy. . . ."

"And why didn't you?"

We went down to the kitchen, fetching Myer on the way.

"There were only three chairs in the kitchen: for my mother, my elder brother, and my sister."

"Why didn't you move another chair into the kitchen?"

"I had my meals with my father—I told you he was Swiss French—and he talked French to me."

"Didn't you like that?"

"I was afraid of making mistakes. My father wasn't happy in Switzerland: after taking his university degree he went to England, and taught French at a school in Bristol. My mother was English. When I first sat for a scholarship in Cambridge, St John's offered me £70: not enough to live on. My father tried to get more for me, but failed. I couldn't get a job: the Depression had begun."

"Didn't you have school friends?"

"No."

WHAT HE TOLD ME was almost unbelievable. I had made very good friends at school; I went to their houses, and they came to ours. But Paul went on:

"Once a year my parents went to a party given by the headmaster. My mother had an 'At Home' once a month: her friends came to tea—all women. Just before my exam for the big school I had a happy experience: I met my mother in town and she said to me: 'I would like to give you a treat. We can either take a boat, or go to the Zoo.' I chose the Zoo, and loved it. My mother told me not to tell Father: he would call the expense an extravagance. When the exam came, one of the themes we had to choose from for the general essay was 'A Visit to the Zoo.' I wrote about our visit. When I got my scholarship, Father asked me: 'How could you write about the Zoo, when you have never been there?' I can't remember what I told him."

"So they were worried about money?"

"Yes. When I failed to get in at Cambridge, I went back to mathematics at Bristol, and by the time I sat again for the Cambridge scholarship two things had happened: I had worked for two years on mathematics, and there were many more scholarships available. I got an Exhibition for 1923."

Later, when we had finished lunch, he said:

"When I got the Nobel Prize in 1933 Rutherford told me I could take my parents to Stockholm, so my mother came with me."

"Not your father?"

"No. I never saw them have a meal together. . . . It was the death of my brother which was a turning-point. He committed suicide in 1925, but all we knew was that he had disappeared. He had removed everything that could have identified him; then, after a time, the police found a spectacle-case and traced it: it was my brother's. . . ." He paused.

"And?"

"My parents were terribly distressed: I didn't know they cared so much."

"You mean they'd never shown it before?"

"Never, and I never knew that parents ought to care for their children, but from then on I knew. . . . And I never saw a woman naked, either in childhood or youth."

"Not your sister, or mother?"

"No. The first time I saw a woman naked was in 1927, when I went to Russia with Peter Kapitza. She was a child, an adolescent. I was taken to a girls' swimming-pool, and they bathed without swimming suits. I thought they looked nice." He smiled. "But now I am interested in the books you wrote on memories."

Dirac could understand my books, but I could not understand his. I found his *Principles of Quantum Mechanics* more difficult than Einstein's papers.¹

He went downstairs to talk to Myer. "I've told Esther many things about myself, and about my parents—I'm not sure I would like it all put in a book." Myer told him to tell me. He came straight up to my study and said, "I suppose people ought to know these things about me."

I promised he should see anything I wrote about him. I kept my promise: all that I have written here of what he told me is in a book, not yet published; and Paul saw it, and approved. (There is no sense in waiting till the book is published: I am 84.)

THE INVESTITURE was next day. Mancini told us later that Paul, already dressed up in his "tails", said, "I think I'll walk to Buckingham Palace. I've never seen the Changing of the Guard." Mancini went straight to a telephone, and phoned the Palace: "My husband wants to walk, but I'm afraid he may be late."

"That's all right, Madam, we'll fetch him." A Rolls-Royce arrived before he could set out, and they went together to the Palace. A few days later he wrote from Cambridge:

I would like to thank you very much for your hospitality and kindness in looking after me and explaining many things to me.

The visit to the Queen went quite smoothly. They explained to me just what to do, when to bow, when to shake hands etc. and I retained enough presence of mind to do it. Mancini came to Buckingham Palace, but stayed in an anteroom and did not see the Queen.² I spoke with the Queen mainly about my work and tried to explain to her how interesting it is to do scientific research, and she agreed it must be a fascinating life. I also told her I had a daughter who had studied geology but had given it up to look after her baby. I said it was difficult for a woman who had to choose between her career and her family and there could not be real equality of the sexes. The Queen said that she did not press for equality of the sexes.

I hope we shall be able to see you before we go.

Best wishes from
Paul

¹ I think the Editor of *Nature*, John Maddox, gave the most impressive analogy between Einstein's work in 1905 and Dirac's *Principles of Quantum Mechanics*: "It is as if Dirac had found a secret window on the foundations of physics, a companion for that through which Einstein looked in 1905. . . ."

² It is customary for recipients of the Order of Merit to attend the Sovereign alone. Mancini was not forgotten: she told us that she was charmingly entertained by ladies-in-waiting.

³ One letter in particular spoke of my record of a pogrom in the Ukraine in 1919 (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, 28 October-1 November 1924): "Ihre Aufsätze haben mir einen tiefen Eindruck gemacht (Your account has made a deep impression on me)."

THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS of Albert Einstein's birth were being planned for 1978 and 1979. In July 1977 we were at the Mill in Norfolk, where we often spent our holidays, and the Diracs asked to join us: they had happy memories of former holidays with us there, especially one very hot Whitsun, I remember.

We were walking along the beach when Paul asked me about Einstein. I had sent him my "Memories of Einstein" (*The Listener*, 8 September 1955), and told him more of what I remembered and what Einstein had written to me.³

Paul said: "You knew Einstein before any of us did."

Soon afterwards I was surprised to get an invitation to contribute to the centenary celebrations in Ulm. The idea of going to Germany repelled me: it made me ill, and I refused. Then I heard from Dirac.

Tallahassee
1 January 1979

Dear Esther,

I was very sorry you did not appear at Ulm, but it was just an unavoidable misfortune. We had an enjoyable time and were very hospitably received. Kapitza also did not appear. He had a sudden illness associated with high blood pressure. He appeared later at Stockholm for the Nobel ceremony and I watched him on television. He was looking rather sick and feeble then. Kapitza had prepared a talk for Ulm and it was circulated among the people who attended. Did you also prepare a talk?

I hope you have quite recovered from your illness. There are several more Einstein celebrations during the coming months. Are you interested in any of them? There is one in Berne, March 12-15, and one in East Berlin, February 28-March 2. I am afraid they do not pay travel expenses. I shall not go to either of these because they clash with other Einstein celebrations in America. I may go to a celebration in Jerusalem later in March. I shall be going to one in Miami next week.

I hope you are completely well now. With all best wishes.

Paul Dirac

An invitation came for the Jerusalem meeting, and Myer and I decided to go. We saw a lot of Paul and Mancini there; Paul loved Israel. He spoke for exactly an hour, without a note, of his debt to Einstein, and of Einstein's debt to Maxwell and Newton; he outlined the present position in physics, forecast what would be the key questions in the future, and spoke frankly of unresolved difficulties. Like Einstein, he was not really happy with the Uncertainty Principle, and he regarded some of the arbitrary adjustments of Quantum Mechanics as inelegant, and therefore probably wrong. Like many mathematicians he believed that beauty was a guide to truth. For my part, I gave an updated version of my 1955 talk (later published in *ENCOUNTER*, April 1979).

WE SAW PAUL only twice more. The last time—in 1983—he had been ill, and was very frail. He died on the 20th October 1984, at the age of 82.

DOCUMENT

“Dear Mr President”

A Confidential Memorandum in Washington

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

November 15, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Responding to
Soviet Violations Policy (RSVP) Study

THIS MEMORANDUM responds to the several issues on which you requested comment in National Security Decision Directive 173. It is an executive summary to which is attached the full report. As I mentioned in my cover letter to you of today, I will be glad to discuss with you some specific things we might do to respond to these violations. The most important thing we can do is press for full funding for SDI in the Congress. The report is an analysis of the pattern and significance of Soviet violations, the prospects for reversing them in Geneva, and some lessons of the past and for the future.

First if I might be permitted, a preliminary word about history, Soviet violations, and what they mean to us. The full report makes clear that the Soviet Union has been violating with impunity its principal arms control agreements with the United States. From the beginning, many felt that the Soviets used the arms control process to obscure their planned offensive buildup, weaving into the fabric of the SALT I and ABM Treaty the loopholes and ambiguities that they would later rely on to becloud or extenuate their violations. That pattern of Soviet behavior continues to this day.

Lessons

THE LESSONS that I believe emerge from our analysis are as follows:

First, our original assumptions that the Soviets

would not violate agreements, because the political repercussions would not be worth any possible gain, have been proved false. The Soviets have, in many cases, violated treaty provisions for small, even marginal gains. The deployment of several dozen SS-16 missiles at a test facility is a case in point. So is the insignificant number by which the Soviets have exceeded the SALT II ceiling on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles and the protracted delays in dismantling systems as required by the Treaty.

Second, there will always be very strong pressures to ignore violations rather than abandon treaties—or even to respond proportionally, and the Soviets know this.

Third, a failure to respond immediately to small infractions often encourages larger ones.

Fourth, verification is not a substitute for compliance. It is vital to know what the Soviets are doing and to be able to judge when violations take place. But verification does not guarantee compliance. Some of the most troubling violations are also the most easily verified. The Krasnoyarsk radar and the SS-25 are examples of violations that the Soviets must have known we would detect.

Fifth, the Standing Consultative Commission, the body assigned to deal with violations, has failed to gain Soviet compliance and will continue to do so. Indeed, it has, I think, generally discouraged more effective measures to gain Soviet compliance by pushing compliance issues into the recesses of a languid, confidential and ineffective forum.

Sixth, as we attempt to negotiate deep reductions in offensive forces the advantages to be gained by cheating will become proportionally greater.

Seventh, it is essential to recognize that the Soviets will exploit loopholes and ambiguities and that their presence in even carefully drafted agreements is unavoidable. This is because the Soviets resist precision and we have a history of acquiescing when they do so.

Eighth, it is easier to fall into a double standard of compliance than to avoid it. Without fear of contradiction at home the Soviets are able to deny violations. We are not. As a democracy we are rightly unwilling (and unable) surreptitiously to violate agreements. Even the decision to make a response proportional to Soviet violations requires great political courage, particularly if violations are not challenged early. Indeed, you are the first President to decide to do so and you can expect considerable controversy over any specific proportional response that you choose to make.

THIS DOCUMENT—addressed to President Ronald Reagan from Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger—was, as we understand it, not classified “SECRET” but only “Confidential.” In any case we see no reason why the whole text should not be made public. We are grateful to a friend in Washington—actually, the Australian correspondent, Peter Samuel—for making a copy available to us. It deserves to be widely read and pondered.

Ninth, violations can only be deterred by responding to them in ways that are more costly to the Soviets than the gains they expect to achieve through cheating. Establishing that we will respond, that we will impose costs at least equal to the benefits of Soviet violations, has been made more difficult by years of indifference and Congressional preoccupation with defense cuts. None of this is to say we should not try urgently and patiently to get the arms reductions agreements you and others want. It is to say there are many problems ahead.

Soviet Violations in Perspective

FOLLOWING is a more detailed summary of the report itself, which, while long, is so because it traces the history of our arms negotiations relationships with the Soviets, and it does provide, I believe, useful background for any new set of negotiations. I hope you will not consider it too negative, or too lacking in hope. I have great hopes myself, based on my certain knowledge of how much you want agreements that will reduce arms.

Your Veteran's Day address at Arlington was a most eloquent statement of why we must continue to try to secure agreements for real and deep reductions that preserve our ability to maintain deterrence at much lower levels, and leave us free to pursue your better way to peace—the SDI—and, above all, agreements that are truly verifiable.

This is a noble quest and you are rightfully pursuing it with my total support. But it is essential, I believe, that we all be aware of how many pitfalls there are, based on the history of Soviet past behavior. We have called attention to their behavior, trying (with only moderate success) to stimulate interest and understanding on the part of Congress, the American people, and the allies, and urging (with no success) the Soviet government to cease and desist.

In our current negotiations with the Soviets, we have worked to devise positions that take account of the verification and compliance problems we have faced in connection with existing treaties. But these steps, however sensible, cannot impose a substantial cost on the Soviet Union for its violations; even more important, they have not negated the special military advantages the Soviets have created for themselves through their violations.

A failure on the part of the United States to respond strongly to the Soviet Union's policy of treaty violation would damage our interests in various ways. It would signal the kind of uncertainty and political weakness that invites adversaries to put one further to the test, and it could be taken as recantation of our findings of violation, thereby undermining

our credibility. A more tangible ill effect would be the consolidation of the military gains the violations have afforded the Soviet Union in fields such as offensive strategic weaponry, strategic defense, and biological warfare.

Moreover, a less than forceful response to the violations would undermine any serious diplomatic endeavor to improve the US-USSR relationship, in the arms control and other arenas.

It may appear paradoxical that the key to improved US-Soviet relations is a vigorous response by us to Soviet treaty violations. But it is no more so than the observation that the key to domestic peace is a police force ready to exert itself to preserve the law.

The Past as Prelude

HISTORY has repeatedly demonstrated that violations of international obligations feed on themselves; the violator tests and judges the reaction to each violation before moving on to the next. This was certainly the experience of the Allied Powers in the period between the wars as Hitler probed to its abject limit the unwillingness of France and Britain to respond to a widening pattern of German treaty violations.

Thus was massive German rearmament permitted to take place, on the land, at sea and in the air, in violation of legally binding treaties. From small German violations great battleships grew.

The failure of the democracies in the 1930s had little to do with the verification of illegal Nazi rearmament. The transformations of Boy Scout troops and police precinct units into *Wehrmacht* divisions, or the conversion of flying clubs into *Luftwaffe* squadrons, were not deceptions put over on an unsuspecting Allied intelligence establishment. They were, on the contrary, clever devices to give those bent on appeasing the Nazis a pretext for inaction.

To those, like Churchill, who saw the consequences of acquiescing in German rearmament, the evidence was clear enough. But for those who were not prepared to act because action required sacrifice and large defense expenditures, always unpopular in democracies, there was ample scope for inconclusive debate over the interpretation of law and intelligence.

And so there is today. Failure to object or respond to violations will invite further violations, many of which are already foreshadowed by national intelligence estimates.

The Pattern of Soviet Violations and US Responses

THE FAILURE OF the Johnson,¹ Nixon, Ford and Carter Administrations to respond seriously to the many Soviet violations that took place during their tenures led to the situation you confronted when, in 1984, you became the first President in five Administrations to find the

¹ During the Johnson Administration the Soviets began the practice of conducting underground nuclear tests in a manner that frequently caused venting of radioactive material into the atmosphere in violation of the Limited Test Ban Treaty. American protests, some 32 of which have been lodged with the Soviets since 1965, became a secret ritual scorned by the Soviets. The most recent such Soviet violation of the LTBT took place on 27 October 1984. Twenty years passed from the time of the first unequivocal evidence of Soviet venting before you, in February 1985, publicly disclosed these chronic violations.

Soviets in violation of a number of important provisions of several arms control agreements, many of which had gone on for years before you called attention to them.

The United States might not be faced with the Krasnoyarsk radar today if, more than a decade ago, we had effectively protested the construction, also illegal under the ABM Treaty, of a Soviet radar at Kamchatka. Although the two violations are quite different in nature (Kamchatka was not nearly so serious militarily), it is likely that the ease with which the US Government acquiesced in the Kamchatka violation in 1975 emboldened the Soviets to approve the Krasnoyarsk project, probably in 1977 or 1978.

In concluding and implementing treaties with friends and allies we assume good faith. Our friends and allies rarely craft loopholes, ambiguities, or definitional imprecision as devices to distort the plain intent of the parties and recapture concessions apparently made by them during the negotiating process. Disputes, when they do arise, are generally settled by negotiation in which the original intent of the parties is a crucial factor in the resolution.

In dealing with the Soviets, however, our experience has been quite different. In SALT I and II and the ABM Treaty, the Soviets insisted on formulations calculated to excuse subsequent actions of precisely the sort the agreements were understood to curtail. And since the agreements were signed, the Soviets have made prodigious use of the loopholes and ambiguities they argued for.

None of this is to say that it will never be possible to get a good arms reduction agreement with the Soviets that is in our interest. Indeed, I think you are in a better position to do this than any previous American President because we *are* strong and the Soviets know you are perfectly able and willing to work for good agreements and not be pressured into bad ones.

Exploiting Loopholes and Ambiguities

THE MOST IMPORTANT EXAMPLE of Soviet exploitation of loopholes, drawn from SALT I, has to do with the deployment of the SS-19, a large, MIRVed Soviet ICBM. Central to the SALT I agreement was a prohibition on the conversion of launchers for light missiles into launchers for heavy missiles. The Soviets successfully resisted US efforts to nail down the definition of the terms "light" and "heavy", claiming that the distinction was "obvious to everyone." Because there then existed one missile, the SS-9, vastly larger than any other deployed on either side, the Soviets encouraged the view that since both sides understood the SS-9 to be "heavy" and the several smaller missiles then deployed to be "light", there would be no problem of distinguishing the two types during the period of the Interim

² A new CIA report confirms that the Krasnoyarsk radar is *not* suited for the purposes claimed for it by the Soviets but is indeed an early warning radar.

³ The Soviets had earlier formally notified us that the SS-X-24 was to be their one permitted new type of ICBM.

Agreement.

While this issue was under discussion the Soviets delayed (in order to conceal it from the US) the flight test and silo construction program of a new ICBM. Once the agreement was signed, the Soviets launched the first test flights of the SS-19, which turned out to have three times the destructive potential (throw-weight) of either side's largest "light" missile. It was as if one party to an agreement limiting the sides to specified numbers of feathers and bricks secretly piled up stones and then argued that because stones are not bricks they must be counted as feathers. We now know that the aura of good faith with which the Soviets enveloped the American negotiators was intended to allay the sort of skepticism that might have led us to insist on precise definitions of such terms as "light" and "heavy."

In building a loophole large enough for the SS-19, the Soviets calculated that the US would eventually acquiesce in a *fait accompli*. They could not have anticipated how scant a protest we would make or how readily the Nixon Administration would plead the Soviet case in order to contain the complaints of Senators who had been told in hearings that the United States would regard as "heavy" any missile larger than the "light" missiles deployed when the agreement was signed.

Looking back on the development of the SS-19 in 1975, it would be hard to fault the Soviets for concluding that the United States would accept without effective protest any Soviet action that could be excused, however disingenuously, by invoking a convenient loophole or ambiguity. And if one can call a rock a feather and get away with it, why not say an early warning radar with a substantial ABM potential is a radar for space tracking and build it at Krasnoyarsk? Such has been the evolution of Soviet non-compliance.²

Violations that Exploit US Intelligence Limitations

IN 1985, the Soviet Union commenced deployment of the mobile SS-25 and thereby violated a provision of the SALT II Treaty limiting each side to the deployment of only one new type of ICBM.³ Despite massive encryption of data during the SS-25 flight test program, we have convincing evidence the Soviet claim that the SS-25 is a permitted modernization of an older ICBM (SS-13) is false. The SS-25 is a new type of ICBM in every respect, including measurable characteristics by which the Treaty defines new types. Particularly troubling is the technical argument by which the Soviets sought to justify the SS-25 since it is likely to be applied to additional new types of ICBMs identified by US intelligence but not yet flight tested. For this reason, a failure to respond effectively to this violation will almost certainly invite additional violations in the future.

In 1979, proponents of the SALT II Treaty stressed the importance of the new-type limit on modernization. They argued that, with the Treaty, the Soviets would be limited to one new type of ICBM while, without a Treaty, several were

expected. A third possibility—that the Soviets would sign the Treaty, violate it and wind up with several new types nonetheless—never figured in the ratification debate, although there was a good deal of discussion about whether the new-type limitation was verifiable.

The evolution of the one-new-type limitation in the SALT II negotiations is instructive. The United States proposed banning all new types of ICBMs. The Soviets insisted that one be permitted and that provision be made for the modification of older types. We conceded both points. There followed a lengthy negotiation aimed at defining the sort of modification that would be allowed for older types of ICBMs.

The constraints finally agreed to under Soviet pressure were narrowly defined. All along, our intent for the one-new-type limit and the associated rules covering allowable modification was to restrict severely the Soviet freedom to bring out a new missile in the guise of modifying an old one. In the end, the Soviets twisted the Treaty's intent and then violated it so as to permit the development of at least two new types. What had begun as a *cul-de-sac* ended up a super-highway leading to the development of a whole generation of new and substantially more capable intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Violations Exacerbating US Intelligence Limitations

W E THINK US efforts to obtain a Soviet pledge to refrain from the encryption of test data telemetry almost certainly alerted Moscow to the importance of telemetry as a source of intelligence about Soviet military programs. The Soviets seldom denied us missile test data before we proposed that they undertake not to do so; agreement on prohibiting encryption necessary for verification purposes, however, was followed immediately by extensive Soviet encryption.

Newly aware of our requirement for test data, the Soviets set about denying it to us. And they have never looked back: encryption, in addition to other concealment and deception measures, has spread like a range fire ever since. In some cases, it is now nearly total. And the Treaty provisions restricting encryption, which SALT II proponents highlighted as a guarantee that the US would have unencumbered access to information necessary for verification and intelligence, are now chronically violated.

During the SALT II ratification debate, the Senate was particularly forceful in asserting the importance it attached to Soviet compliance with the limitations on telemetry encryption. The report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Treaty included the following statement:

"... Any practice with regard to the transmission of telemetric information during the testing of strategic arms limited by the Treaty, including but not limited to the failure to transmit relevant telemetric information, which results in impeding of verification by United States national technical means of any provision of the Treaty,

will be raised by the United States in the Standing Consultative Commission and if the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the United States, the United States reserves the right to exercise all other available remedies, including, but not limited to, the right to withdraw from the Treaty."

The Administration and Congress alike understood that a violation of the encryption provision would have profound consequences for US intelligence and could undermine the many Treaty provisions whose verification depended on access to Soviet test data. Here again we are faced with a violation which, unless reversed, is certain to diminish still further our ability to monitor Soviet activities and to verify their compliance with Treaty obligations.

Krasnoyarsk and Territorial Defense

O F THE MANY VIOLATIONS of the USSR's arms control obligations, the most serious includes, but is not limited to, the large Soviet phased-array radar under construction near Krasnoyarsk. For associated with that radar is a variety of other violations, some of the spirit or intent, others of the letter, of the complex constraints in the ABM Treaty aimed at preventing the deployment of a territorial defense involving a nation-wide anti-ballistic missile system.

While the evidence is not conclusive, there is good reason to be alarmed at the combination of Soviet development of readily-transportable radars, significant upgrading of the Moscow ABM system, the testing of air-defense components in an ABM mode, the development (and testing) of air-defense missiles capable of intercepting ballistic missile warheads and the completion of a network of large phased-array radars of which the radar at Krasnoyarsk is a part. Taken together, these activities, some reaching back into the early and mid-1970s, could indicate the beginning of Soviet territorial defense against ballistic missiles.

The central restriction of the ABM Treaty is the limit it places on the deployment of large phased-array radars. Because they typically take five-to-seven years to build and are the pacing element in an integrated defense system, these highly visible large radars were severely constrained in the 1972 Treaty. Once deployed, these radars form the essential infrastructure to which interceptors and smaller radars might be added, expanding incrementally the capacity of the system as a whole to detect, track and intercept US or allied warheads launched in retaliation against Soviet targets.

That the Soviets are today poised for such a development is a consequence of a pattern of violations, many of which must have been planned during and in the period immediately following the ABM Treaty negotiations. It is likely that the Soviets will continue further to refine the air defense components and transportable radars necessary to make full use of the large phased-array radar base that is now nearing completion—a base that greatly exceeds that planned by the United States for deployment of the Safeguard ABM system abandoned in the aftermath of the ABM Treaty.

The Standing Consultative Commission

SALT I AND II and the ABM Treaty all provided for a Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) for the drafting of technical implementing agreements and the resolution of compliance issues. It consists of representatives of the US and Soviet Union who negotiate on the occasion of their meetings. Its deliberations are secret.

Contrary to the claims often made for it, the SCC has failed to resolve any significant compliance issue in the approximately 1,500 days that it has been in session over the last 13 years. A less productive forum for the resolution of disputes would be difficult to find.

Far from resolving disputes over compliance, the SCC has become a diplomatic carpet under which Soviet violations have been continuously swept, an Orwellian memory-hole into which our concerns have been dumped like yesterday's trash. Unwilling to face up to a mounting record of Soviet violations, successive administrations have consigned our concerns to the SCC where they have been "discussed", often for years on end, with wholly unsatisfactory results.

Violations raised by the US in the SCC were dealt with in slow motion while they continue and until they had run their course, at which time they were declared to have been resolved. A good case in point is the Soviet program for testing air defense components in an "ABM mode" in violation of the ABM Treaty. Well over 100 suspicious tests were conducted over twelve years while the SCC painted an attenuated arabesque that served to obscure their continuation. When their tests were completed the Soviets announced, and the United States gratefully received, the news that they would cease. Even this dismal result proved ephemeral; after a brief interval, the Soviets resumed the prohibited tests—and back we went to the SCC.

Our Administration has been the first to acknowledge the ineffectiveness of the SCC, and the first one willing to report publicly Soviet violations.

There are those who believe that the inadequacies of the SCC can be overcome by a redoubled effort. I believe this misses the essential point about the SCC. If the Soviets comply with agreements, the issue of violations will not arise in the SCC or anywhere else. If they wish to violate them, they will not be deterred by semi-annual meetings of the SCC. The SCC is merely a forum for discussion, a date and place and list of attendees. While, in theory, it could be used to dispel misunderstandings, misunderstanding is not the source of Soviet behavior; rather, Soviet behavior is motivated by a desire to gain advantage and the SCC is powerless to affect it.

A constituency has developed around the SCC composed, as is the SCC itself, of Soviets and Americans who believe that violations of agreements must not be permitted to

become prominent features of the arms control dialogue. Only a clear declaration from the President that the SCC has failed offers any prospect that we will find the will and opportunity to make the appropriate responses that will create incentives for Soviet compliance and disincentives to Soviet violations.

Significance of the Pattern of Violations

THE CURRENT AND FUTURE Soviet violations pose real risks to our security and to the process of arms control itself.

The Krasnoyarsk radar together with other indications suggesting a possible future territorial defense could have a profound impact on our strategic deterrent forces. Even a probable territorial defense would require us to increase the number of our offensive forces and their ability to penetrate Soviet defences to assure that our operational plans could be executed. The deployment in significant numbers of the SS-25 (which is now well underway) will erode deterrence by allowing the Soviets to contemplate a first-strike using their fixed ICBMs, while retaining intact a reserve force of mobile systems resilient to counter-attack. On-going encryption of flight-test telemetry will continue to rob us of valuable intelligence and diminish further our ability to verify Soviet compliance with arms control agreements. Other Soviet concealment practices will have a similar effect.

These few examples are illustrative. For each of the violations that you have reported to the Congress there are associated risks to our security. When violations of the spirit of past agreements are added to the list—the deployment of the SS-19, the conversion of ballistic missile launching submarines to cruise missile launching submarines, and the like—the cumulative impact on our security is deeply troubling.

We believe modernized strategic and conventional forces and vigorous research present the strongest message to the Soviets in response to their treaty violations. Such US forces and research also provide the best hedge against future Soviet threats. There are a number of military programs which have been cancelled or reduced due to budget constraints. These reductions could have a significant effect on our deterrent capability. Thus our priority response should be to implement fully these programs. I will be prepared to discuss our options for proportionate responses upon your return from Geneva.

I think it is still possible to obtain, by patient negotiation with the Soviets, verifiable agreements that make sharp reductions, down to parity, in the nuclear arsenals. Both powers' strategic defense remains, however, as the greatest single long-range hope of mankind.

LETTERS

Kolakowski's "Rationality"

IT WAS slightly disappointing that Leszek Kolakowski's splendidly rational article (ENCOUNTER, March) should lean towards the irrational in its last paragraph.

A "totalitarian system which treats people as exchangeable parts in the state machinery" is in no sense "a triumph of rationality." We have, of course, no idea of what a rational society would be like, but we can know the irrational when we see it. It is clear that any society which tries to suppress human irrationality is attempting the impossible, and is therefore itself irrational.

Furthermore, the irrational, because it is irrational, cannot be programmed into any attempted rational model of society. There are too many variables involved for the human mind ever to construct a perfect (i.e. rational) society. We have to recognise, then, that all past, present, and future societies must be irrational. The danger in suggesting that societies like Nazi Germany, or the USSR, might be considered "triumphs of rationality" is that it diminishes respect for reason in an era when it needs every scrap of support that rational men can provide.

J. F. WATKINS

Abergavenny
Gwent

Hook's Marx

PROFESSOR SIDNEY HOOK says: "Marx would have regarded the advent of a collectivised society in an economy-of-scarcity in underdeveloped countries like Russia and China as a refutation of his theory of historical materialism" [ENCOUNTER, January].

There may be reason to doubt this claim. In his Preface to the Russian edition to the *Communist Manifesto* Marx wrote:

"Now the question is: Can the Russian *obshchina*, though greatly undermined, yet a form of the primeval common ownership of land, pass directly to the higher form of communist common ownership? Or, on the contrary, must it first pass through the same process of dissolution as constitutes the historical evolution of the West?"

The only answer to that possible today is this: If the Russian Revolu-

tion becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting-point for a communist development."

No doubt, this is a complex matter; but Marx seems to suggest here that one can start socialist developments in "underdeveloped countries like Russia and China", provided this is combined with a forceful expansionism. And that is just what appears to have been the policy of the Soviet Union.

TIBOR R. MACHAN

Reason Foundation
Santa Barbara, California

Sidney Hook's Reply

MARX'S well-known letter in no way invalidates my contention that collectivisation of all means of production in an economy of scarcity falsifies the central assertions of Marx's theory of historical materialism. Already in *The German Ideology* (1845) Marx had stressed the high degree of development of productive power as a presupposition of the existence of communist society.

"... this development of productive forces (which at the same time implies the actual empirical existence of men in their *world-historical*, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise, because without it, privation, *want* is merely made general, and with *want* the struggle for necessities would begin again, and all the old filthy business would necessarily be restored" ... [class struggles, exploitation, etc. S.H.]

Marx-Engels Collected Works (London)
Vol. 5, pp. 48-9.

However Soviet society is characterised, whether as state socialism or state capitalism or as "industrial feudalism" (Oscar Lange) etc., its economy has indisputably been collectivised. Notice that Marx's letter explicitly makes the possibility of communist ownership in backward Russia contingent upon successful proletarian revolutions in the highly industrialised West where Marx had predicted they would first occur. Such revolutions notoriously failed to be realised not only in Marx's lifetime but in Lenin's, therewith undermining any claim to Marxist legitimacy of Bolshevik retention of dictatorial power. History has been guilty of *lese-Marxism*—and the most weighty strands of evidence of this are the emergence of Fascism or National-Socialism, Bolshevism in its varied versions in Europe and Asia, and the democratic Welfare States of the West, none of which Marx anticipated.

Note also that Dr Machan has misread Marx's letter. Nowhere in that letter, or anywhere else, does Marx "suggest that one can start socialist developments in underdeveloped countries like Russia and China provided this is combined with a forceful [*sic!*] expansionism." When Marx speculates that the proletarian revolutions in the West and the Russian revolution would "complement" each other, he is obviously referring to their coordination in a world socialist economy. He no more envisaged "forceful expansion" of the Russian Revolution than the existence of socialism in one country.

Marx's failings may be many but he was a life-long champion of human freedom. It seems to me to be a gross violation of both the letter and spirit of his writings to read into them any justification for Communist régimes anywhere.

SIDNEY HOOK

Hoover Institution
Stanford
California

"The War Against the Whigs"

IN George Watson's otherwise admirable essay on the Whig interpretation of history [ENCOUNTER, January], I was astonished to read that in no other European nation save England was "a double shift towards industrialism and political democracy . . . achieved . . . without bloodshed."

Why is there such parochialism amongst English historians? Has Dr Watson not heard of Sweden, of Norway, of Finland, or of Switzerland, and their histories? This isn't a rhetorical question; I'm really curious.

Mind you, his essay was worth it just for the story of Sir Herbert Butterfield's astonishing remark in 1939.

JOHN FORD

London

SORRY TO HAVE left out peaceful Scandinavia. The Swiss *Sonderbund* was a nasty little war, far better forgotten.

GEORGE WATSON

Cambridge

Psycho-Tyrannies

WHILE READING David Aberbach's, "How Demented Was Hitler?" article in the September/October issue, I realised how ridiculous the task of applying "psychological" motivations to tyrants really is. I'm sure there have been despots in history who had both their testicles and came from a perfectly sound family environment.

Also, I came to the conclusion that if Germany and Japan had won the War we would be reading articles about how President Roosevelt's polio was responsible for the civilian bombing of Dresden—and how Harry Truman's childhood *Angst* was responsible for dropping the Atomic Bomb. Ridiculous? You bet, so is your Hitler article.

GARY ROMEO

Royal Oak
Michigan

Hitler's "Madness"

THE QUESTION whether Hitler was mad, or how mad he was (especially if symptoms or causes are isolated) is, as Mr Romeo indicates, susceptible to ridicule; and it is not the main issue. The main question of my article involves the ways in which Hitler's inner world acted as a parallel, or microcosm, of Germany after the First World War: To what extent did Hitler create a Nazi Germany in his image, and to what extent was it the other way round? I agree with Mr Romeo's implication that history is written by the victors, though there are exceptions—the Bible for example, in which the Jewish authors blame their own people for their exile. Nevertheless, the psychological analysis of a politician does not necessarily imply condemnation of him. Anthony Storr (in *Churchill: Four Faces and the Man*) expresses deep admiration for Churchill while pointing out that certain aspects of his character can be best understood in the light of psychoanalytic theory.

DAVID ABERBACH

Oxford

Stove's Popper

ACCORDING to D. C. Stove, (ENCOUNTER, June), Sir Karl Popper taught his disciples "that we cannot learn anything by experience." How bizarre! Popper's main point, made

over and over in every book he has written since *Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959) is that science grows as experiences weed out the false theories. In his more recent works (for example, *The Self and its Brain*) Popper has strengthened his position and suggested that psychology mirrors logic and that the primary means of learning is by trial and error.

Equally strange is Stove's assertion that the success of science is somehow antithetical to Popper's view of science. If this were the case it is difficult to understand why so many scientists have found Popper's philosophy such an attractive one, and why Popper himself should have spent so much of his life expounding the virtues of looking at the world in a scientific manner.

Stove's ignorance of the literature is his own affair and of no importance. What is of importance however is that no one should be misled by Stove's article into thinking that Popperianism is some kind of strange cult, explainable in purely psychological or sociological terms. Popper, Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend all start from a *wholly objective* problem situation which can be summed up as follows: (1) Scientific laws are framed as universal statements, that is, they consist of the logical product of an infinite number of experimental statements; (2) They can therefore only be proven through the verification of an infinite number of observations, which is impossible; (3) Yet, despite the fact that scientific theories can never be proven, science has been immensely successful.

PUT ANOTHER WAY, the Popperian philosopher is concerned with the problem of how, given that induction is a logical impossibility, knowledge is possible. (Mr Stove's suggestion that an inductivism is still a viable philosophy of science cannot be taken seriously and really does cry out for sociological explanation!) Popper and Lakatos have both made contributions toward solving this problem. Popper first showed the way by pointing to the fact that sci-

entific success could be explained by the logically valid method of deduction rather than the invalid one of induction. Lakatos made further progress by showing how the rather simplistic views expressed by Popper in his early works fitted into the context of actual science.

These were real contributions to intellectual progress and cannot be as easily dismissed as Stove suggests.

LAWRENCE D. GASMAN

Chapel Hill
North Carolina

MR GASMAN thinks it is part of Popper's philosophy that "scientific laws are framed as universal statements, that is, they consist of the logical product of an infinite number of experimental statements. . . . Alas, Mr Gasman, this is not Popper's doctrine at all: in fact it is inconsistent with it. Of course, Popper sometimes says that "*All crows are black*" (say) entails an infinitely-long conjunction of statements like "Abe is a black crow or not a crow at all", "Bob is a black crow or not a crow at all", and so on. But statements such as these, Popper says most emphatically, are *not* experimental statements (or "basic statements" as he calls them). Popper holds that they are *negations* of basic statements, and that the negation of a basic statement is *never* a basic statement. (All this is stated, with the utmost explicitness, on p. 101 of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*.)

So it is back to his bible for Mr Gasman. While he is at it, he might try reconciling the idea that a law asserts the existence of infinitely many things, with the equally-Popperite idea that a law does not assert the existence of anything at all! The latter is stated on p. 69, for example, of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. But better still, Mr Gasman might consider forgetting all about Popper's philosophy of science, and leaving the whole business to people whose professional duties oblige them to be *au fait* with it.

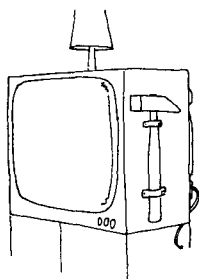
D. C. STOVE

University of Sidney

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Life & Letters Today



Niue Island
TV FUTURE: It's hard to believe that television may actually be the key to a nation's survival. But Sir Robert R. Rex, head of government on the tiny island of Niue (2,000km north-east of New Zealand), is relying on it.

Niue is believed to be one of the smallest independent nations in the world and Sir Robert's problem is that it's getting smaller all the time. Even New Zealand, it appears, is an exciting alternative for idle Niueans—more than

two-thirds of the 9,000 locals have emigrated in the past decade.

So Sir Robert has been forced to adopt drastic measures to boost his electorate. He's introducing television.

As of mid-1986 Niue will have an extensive cable TV network, a move that Sir Robert believes will encourage folks to stick around.

Fourteen villages will be linked by an American communications company. Within 20 years, as the obsession with glittery New Zealand wears off and former residents are given incentives to return, Sir Robert maintains the island will become the retirement village of the South Pacific.

SYDNEY SUN HERALD

Barnet
TOUGH BABIES: The violence some 5-to-11-year-olds write about in their school essays is frightening teachers.

One told a boy she did not like his account of a man's head being ripped apart. He suggested that the character should be stabbed to death instead.

The teacher, Lalage Bowman, is one of several in the North London borough of Barnet, who are trying to find out if the problem is widespread.

If examples they are collecting from neighbouring primary schools are equally sinister they will ask the National Union of Teachers to launch a major investigation. Teachers suspect television is responsible.

DAILY MAIL

Washington
SEX TYPO: Warner Books is recalling 115,000 copies of Dr Ruth Westheimer's "First Love: A Young People's Guide to Sexual Information" because of a sentence saying the safest time to have sex is during a woman's most fertile period.

A librarian in Ramsey, New Jersey, discovered the sentence in Chapter 10: "The safest times are the week before and the week of ovulation." "Obviously", she said generously, "it was meant to be 'unsafe.' It sounds like a typo."

WASHINGTON POST

Kingston, Jamaica
ISLAND TALK: What is happening to the language these days? Someone told me recently that she has virol (a virus), and the gardener describes the Christmas-eve gas cylinder explosion as a strategy (tragedy). A J.B.C. news reader speaks of a cashay (cache) of arms, and Nayple (for Nepal).

The newspaper reports that Benbow is in "Dire straights", while a headline assures us that a woman "received 25 stitches from husband's wounds." How generous of him!

Another news item says "The truck loaded with marl was parked when this car ran under it. It is further understood that apart from the car, the driver did not suffer any major injuries." Yet another reports that the "New York City's Police Commissioner, Benjamin Ward, and his men are raging war on ganja [marijuana] shops." It was so good to hear Prime Minister Seaga showing Jamaicans how to pronounce "CHARACTER." In his Christmas Message, he correctly said "KARIKTER" with the stress correctly on the first syllable. So many Jamaicans say "KARACTA" with the stress on the second syllable. A pity.

JAMAICA DAILY GLEANER

London
LA PETITE DIFFÉRENCE: Even in these decadent days almost every schoolboy knows that the French speak French instead of English. But non-French words are different, too. **Ad hoc** and **haddock** (which means smoked haddock) are pronounced in precisely the same way. Mrs Thatcher is "Madame Tat-share" (with the stress on the second syllable), Mr Howe is "Monsieur Oo" or "Monsieur Ov." Mr "G. Litty" is **Monsieur Joli Ti**, though in his native Italy he is Signor Giolitti.

THE TIMES

Moscow
OFF LIMITS: After six years the Afghan war is coming home in new ways.

Coverage of the war has abandoned its early description of dedicated soldiers giving purely "humanitarian assistance." Accounts now talk of "combat missions" and "pitched battles."

In official accounts the Soviet force in Afghanistan remains a "limited contingent" doing its "internationalist duty" in an "undeclared war" launched by Western imperialism through reactionary rebels. Even news dispatches about the fighting bear the dateline "With the Limited Contingent of Soviet Forces in Afghanistan."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Zimbabwe
THEOCRACY: There is a report in the Bulawayo "Sunday News" about a speech at the launching of the Zimbabwe-Libya "People's Friendship Society" in Harare earlier this month. It states:

"... the Minister of Transport, Comrade Herbert Ushewokunze, described himself as the archbishop of politics and the Prime Minister, Comrade Mugabe, as the Pope."

DAILY TELEGRAPH



Seattle, Washington
ONE-LINER: The Chief of One-Liners had them laughing in Seattle the other day as he needled his detractors.

"And there are still some diehards", President Reagan said, "who refuse to acknowledge that the changes we've made have had anything to do with America's dramatic progress in these last few years."

"They sort of remind me of the fellow who was asked which was worse, Ignorance or Apathy, and he said, 'I don't know, and I don't care.'"

NEW YORK TIMES

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AUTHORS

James Rusbridger (born 1928, educated at St Michael's College, Tenbury, and Dover College) in 1952 joined the Naval Design Office at Vickers Armstrong, where he worked on the design and testing of a variety of post-War naval weapons systems. In the mid-1960s he moved to a major international trading company with headquarters in the City of London, and frequently visited the Soviet Union and East Europe.

Since his retirement to Cornwall, he has undertaken private research and written about various aspects of World War II, together with more recent intelligence operations involving *Sigint* and cryptography, and has made a special study of those operations carried out by the Germans and Japanese against the Allies. He has contributed to several BBC television documentaries about the work of the Intelligence services, and is currently writing a book, to be published by Arms & Armour Press, on the wartime work of German Intelligence. A television documentary based on his *ENCOUNTER* article "The Sinking of the 'Automedon', the Capture of the 'Nankin'" (May 1985) was shown on *Timewatch* (BBC Television) in January; a second article, "Winds of Warning: Enigma & Pearl Harbor", appeared in the January 1986 issue of *ENCOUNTER*.

Jack Curtis, born in Kansas in 1922, has published six collections of poems (his latest, *Obra Reciente*, in Spanish and English, was published last year by La Chachora in La Paz), four novels, and many short stories and screenplays. In 1979 he received the All Nations Poetry Award. An earlier story of his, "A Day's Work", appeared in *ENCOUNTER* in July 1954.

Bryan Magee is Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the History of Ideas at King's College, London. For nearly ten years he was a Member of Parliament, first with Labour, then with the Social Democratic Party. He has published several books on politics and philosophy, including special studies of Karl Popper (1973) and Schopenhauer (1983). Currently he is preparing a television series on the history of Western philosophy for the BBC, to be screened in 1987. His article first took the form of the annual Charles Carter Lecture at the University of Lancaster.

Sidney Monas, Editor of the *Slavic Review*, teaches history and Russian literature at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of *The Third Section: Police and Society in Russia under Nicholas I* (Harvard University Press, 1961), and translated and edited *The Selected Essays of Osip Mandelstam* (University of Texas Press, 1977). He has written widely on Russian and European literature and cultural history.

John Greening's collections of poems include *Westerners* (Hippopotamus Press, 1982) and *Winter Journeys* (Riveling Press, 1984).

George MacBeth's most recent collection of poems is *The Long Darkness*, published in 1983 by Secker & Warburg, who this summer are to publish his long poem, *The Cleaver Garden*.

Jean-François Revel writes a column for the Paris journal *Le Point*. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Harvey Einbinder is the author of *The Myth of the Britannica* (n.e. Johnson Reprint, 1971), and has written many critical evaluations of encyclopaedias.

Donald Cameron Watt is Stevenson Professor of International History in the University of London. His latest book is *Succeeding John*

Bull: America in Britain's Place (Cambridge University Press, 1984); his other works include *A History of the World in the 20th Century* (1969), *Personalities and Policies* (n.e. Greenwood Press, 1976) and *Too Serious a Business* (Temple Smith, 1975). His most recent contribution to *ENCOUNTER* is "Nuremberg Remembered" (May 1978).

Eric Rhode, chiefly known to *ENCOUNTER* readers as a writer on film (for example his book *History of the Cinema from its Origins to 1970*, Allen Lane, 1976) is a psychotherapist. He edited *The Game That Must be Lost*, the collected papers of Adrian Stokes (Carcaret, 1973), and has just completed a book to be called *On Birth and Madness*. His most recent *ENCOUNTER* article was "The Self as Double Agent" (December 1979).

Colin Style is a freelance writer who, born and brought up in Zimbabwe, now lives in Kent. He is at present compiling a programme, *Dream of Ophir*, for BBC Radio 3, exploring the history of Zimbabwe as seen through its literature, and has co-edited (with his wife) *The Mambo Book of Zimbabwean Verse in English*, to be brought out this year by Mambo Press in Zimbabwe. He has published two collections of poetry: *Musical Saw* (Zimbabwe, 1981), and *Baobab Street* (Johannesburg, 1977), which won the Ingrid Jonker prize for the best first collection of poems in English published in Southern Africa.

Rüdiger Görner is Lecturer in European area studies, Department of Linguistic and International Studies, University of Surrey. His poetry, essays, and fiction have been published in German, and he contributes to various magazines and radio programmes in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. His study *The Diary in Literature* was published this spring by Winkler/Artemis (Munich and Zurich).

Neil Berry recently completed his thesis for London University on *The Edinburgh Review*. His reviews appear in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Literary Review*, *London Magazine*, and other journals.

Ned Thomas, Senior Lecturer in English at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and editor of *Planet*, is the author of *The Welsh Extremist: A Culture in Crisis* (Gollancz, 1971), *Derek Walcott* (Welsh Arts Council, 1980), and *Waldo Williams* (Pant y Celwyn, 1985).

Chris Zithulele Mann, winner of the Newdigate Prize while a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, has published two volumes of poetry, the second of which won the Olive Schreiner Prize. He is Administrative Director of The Valley Trust, a medical and agricultural organisation that works among the Zulu in the Valley of a Thousand Hills outside Durban, and a member of Zabalaza, a Zulu/Western rock and roll band.

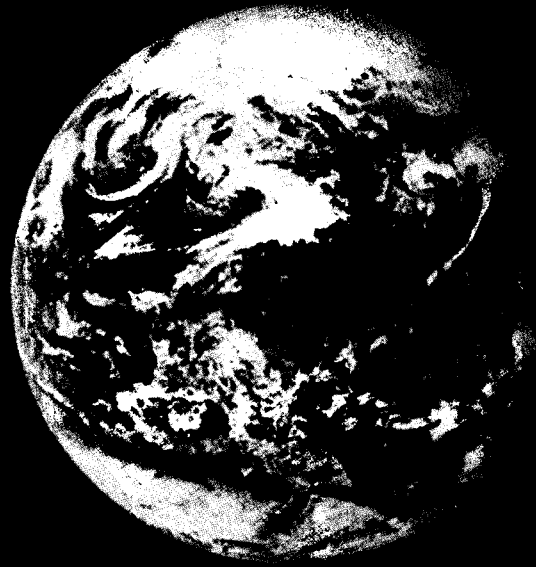
Max Beloff, Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, from 1957-74, and Principal of the University College at Buckingham, 1974-79, was created a life peer in 1981. His most recent books are *Wars and Welfare, Britain 1914-1945* (Edward Arnold, 1984) and, as co-author, *Government of the United Kingdom* (Weidenfeld, 1985).

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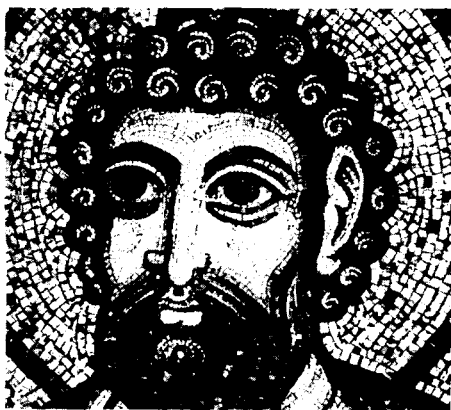
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